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Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the last 500 years

H. E. Chehabi

With contributions by

Rula Jurdi Abisaab

Judith Harik

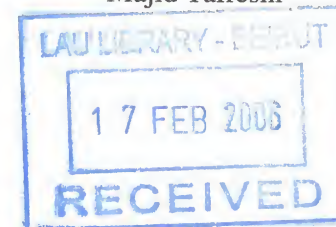
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Albert Hourani (1915–93) was university lecturer in the history of the Modern Near East at Oxford University and director of St Antony College's Middle East Centre. He was the author of many books, including the classic *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1789–1939* and *The History of the Arab Peoples*.

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Majid Tafreshi is an independent scholar living in London. He has edited numerous books in Persian and specializes in twentieth-century Iranian religious history.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AD	anno Domini (year of our Lord)
AH	anno Hegirae
AHS	anno Hegirae (solar)
AUB	American University in Beirut
b.	<i>bin</i> (son of)
BC	before Christ
c.	<i>circa</i> (about)
CDR	Council for Development and Reconstruction
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COS	chief of station
d.	died
ed.	editor
eds	editors
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
H	Hajj
Ho.	Hojjat al-Islam
IRP	Islamic Republican Party
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
KDP-I	Kurdish Democratic Party-Iran
LMI	Liberation Movement of Iran
LNM	Lebanese National Movement
LOC	Library of Congress
MIR	Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Chile)
NA	National Archives (USA)
n.d.	no date
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIOC	National Iranian Oil Company
NMRI	National Movement of Resistance of Iran
n.p.	no place/no publisher
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries
p.	page
pp.	pages

PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PMOI	People's Mojahedin of Iran
PRO	Public Record Office
PSP	Progressive Socialist Party
RC	Reconstruction Campaign
RFE/RL	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
SAMA ^c	<i>Sazeman-e makhsus-e ettehad va camal</i> (Special Organization for Unity and Action)
SAVAK	<i>Sazeman-e Ettela'at va Amniyat-e Keshvar</i> (Shah's secret police)
S.	Seyyed, Sayyid
SISC	Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council
SLA	South Lebanon Army
SPC	Syrian Protestant College
SSNP	Syrian Social National Party
UAR	United Arab Republic
Unicef	United Nations Children's Fund (formerly United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund)
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNOG	United Nations Observation Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

A Note on Transcription and Transliteration

Consistent transliteration of Arabic and Persian words and names in the text is aesthetically unpleasing, but it is necessary in references, as these can nowadays be searched for in on-line library catalogues. Simply leaving out the diacritical marks of transliterated words in the text is unacceptable, as one sign often comes to signify two sounds: the 'a' can stand for both the *alif* and the *fatha*, making the Persian word *bastani* signify both ice cream (*bastanī*) and ancient (*bāstānī*). This introduces confusion into a realm where precision should be the norm.

I have therefore opted for a mixed system: in the text Arabic and Persian words are transcribed in a commonsensical system that approximates actual pronunciation but spares the reader the visual encumbrance of diacritics, whereas in footnotes references are fully transliterated to help the reader locate them in bibliographies, catalogues, and indices.

Any book that deals with both Arabic and Persian confronts the problem of how to transcribe Arabic loanwords in the Persian language, where they are pronounced differently. I have opted to treat them as Persian words.

As for proper names, given the high status of French and English in Lebanon, Lebanese names are rendered as their bearers render them in the Latin alphabet: thus Gemayel rather than Jumayyil. Iranian names, however, have been transcribed from Persian. In quotations the original rendering is given. These are all compromise solutions and are bound to produce inconsistencies; for these I seek the reader's indulgence.

Preface

Lebanon and its people have charmed me ever since I was an undergraduate in France in the early 1970s. I detected in my Lebanese fellow students a mixture of East and West to which I felt drawn immediately, having been brought up by a German mother and an Iranian father in Cologne and Teheran. Since then I have time and again been struck by the cultural affinities between Lebanese and Iranian expatriates in Europe and North America, who seem to be able to take a lot for granted in each other's company and therefore socialize readily, radically different opinions as to the proper way of imbibing caffeine notwithstanding.

Similarities that seemed anecdotal became tragically tangible when in the late 1970s and 1980s both Lebanese and Iranian societies were torn apart by civil strife and ravaged by war in a series of conflicts that were at times entangled. Moreover, the support that Iran's revolutionary government has extended to a sector of Lebanon's Shi'i community since 1982 has created new linkages between the two countries, generating affinities between Iranians and Lebanese who, on the surface at least, seem to have at least as much in common with each other as they have with other social strata among their respective compatriots.

Given how closely Lebanese and Iranian destinies were intertwined in the 1980s, the paucity of scholarly studies of the historic connections between the two societies, connections that go back five centuries, astonished me. In due course I resolved to remedy the situation myself, and so I proposed a research project to the Centre for Lebanese Studies in Oxford. It met with the enthusiastic approval of its Board of Governors, and I was given a CLS fellowship for the academic year 1994–95, during which I did much of the preparatory work for the present volume. I spent that year at the Middle East Centre of St Antony's College, whose fondly remembered erstwhile director, Albert Hourani, had been the first scholar in the West to draw attention to the migration of scholars from what is now Lebanon to Iran. It is only fitting that we include his pioneering work in this book, and we thank the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* for granting permission to reprint it.

While I was in Oxford, Nadim Shehadi and Fida Nasrallah, the then director and associate director of the Centre, provided not only intellectual stimulation but also cheerful company. Together we organized a conference on Lebanese–Iranian

relations at Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies in the autumn of 1996, while I was a visiting scholar at the Center. This conference could not have taken place without the active support and encouragement of its then director, Roger Owen. Rula Jurdi Abisaab, Tamara Chalabi, Hussein Gharbieh, Hassan I. Mneimneh, Augustus Richard Norton, Said Saffari, Seyyed Kazem Sajjadpour, A. W. Samii, and Haleh Vaziri participated actively in the discussions, and I am deeply grateful to them all. Chapters 3, 5, 6, 7 and 10 of this book are based on papers presented at that conference.

In the spring of 2001 I was finally able to visit Lebanon, thanks to an invitation of AUB's Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies. The Center's director, Nadia El-Cheikh, as well as Vahid Behmardi, Chibli Mallat, Khaled Yacoub Oweis, Paul Salem, and Kemal Shehadi hosted me graciously on that occasion and made the trip unforgettable. They have all left traces in this book, some more immediately visible than others, and I thank them for both their intellectual stimulation and their fellowship over the years. My very special thanks go to Hassan I. Mneimneh, who shares my visceral distaste for any type of ethnocentricity, be it communal, religious, ethnic, national, or even, of late, 'civilizational', and who was a co-conspirator in this project almost since the beginning. He has taught me most of what I know about Lebanon (and several other topics) in the course of endless conversations in Cambridge and long drives in Beirut, and his family opened their arms widely in Beirut and Tripoli.

Stimulated by my trip, I rethought the project and decided to write 'missing chapters' myself, until I ended up having written more than half the book. My aim was to go beyond the hackneyed stereotype of the 'pro-Iranian Hizballah' and shed light on different dimensions of Irano–Lebanese relations, thereby adding a social and cultural history sensibility to the study of international relations. This took time, and I thank the other contributors for their patience.

Juan R. I. Cole, Yasmine Gemayel, Irene Gendzier, Sohail H. Hashmi, Shaady Hekmat, Homa Katouzian, W. A. Samii, Hossein Seifzadeh, Majid Tafreshi, and Julie Tschyloyans graciously helped me find information I needed, and Rula Jurdi Abisaab, Lara Deeb, Mark Farha, Hasan Kayali, Hossein Modarresi, Vali Nasr, Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlohr, Elizabeth Vernon, and especially Stephan Rosiny took time to read one or more chapters and provided detailed comment. Many others, identified in the footnotes, consented to be interviewed. I also wish to acknowledge the sustained help and advice of librarians at Harvard University and AUB. At the former John Emerson, Sunil Sharma, and Matthew Smith and at the latter Asma Fathallah showed a dedication beyond all call of duty. I thank them all. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to Selina and Robin Cohen for their hospitality in Oxford and to the Institute for Iranian Studies of the Austrian Academy of

Sciences for providing me a most pleasant institutional home during the final stage of this book's production.

This book would not have been published without the active support of Mr George Asseily, Mr Ali Ghandour and the Board of Governors of the Centre for Lebanese Studies.

Vienna, December 2004

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Five Centuries of Lebanese–Iranian Encounters

H. E. Chehabi and Hassan I. Mneimneh

Events of the last two decades seem to have compelled the media to reduce the Iranian–Lebanese connection to the support afforded by some centres of power within the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Lebanese militant group Hizballah, notably in its confrontation with Israel. The Hizballah connection indeed constitutes a qualitative leap in the history of Iranian–Lebanese relations, for it represents the successful transplant, in a Lebanese native form, of Iranian-conceived institutions, providing the government of Iran with a reliable means of influencing the evolution of both Lebanese internal politics and the Middle East conflict. Hizballah has represented the potential as well as the limitations of exporting the Islamic revolution. While it established Iran as a player and power broker in a region where it had no permanent or reliable influence, its evolution has demonstrated the difficulties of steering the 'exportation' along preconceived lines.

While the uniqueness of Hizballah in Iranian–Lebanese relations has to be recognized, it does not come out of nowhere, and constitutes in fact a particularly developed episode of a recurrent pattern of contacts between Iran, as a society and a state, and the lands that make up Lebanon today. The purpose of this collection of articles is to provide a reasoned survey of some of the transnational ties between Iran and Lebanon, covering some of the major episodes in which people from Iran and Lebanon have come into contact over the last few centuries.

At the outset, a number of methodological issues need to be addressed, most importantly national definition and periodization. There is indeed a teleological component in projecting into the past current definitions of national belonging. Is the subject of Iranian–Lebanese ties a valid one when applied to a period when 'Lebanon did not exist'?

Cultural, commercial and political interactions between the geographic areas that are today Iran and Lebanon go back to antiquity. The first important historical

episode dates back to the Achaemenid Empire, which ruled the Phoenician coast and its hinterland for two centuries between 539 and 332 BC. The Persian rulers allowed the Phoenician city-states of Tyre, Sidon, Byblos and Arwad (modern-day Arwad in Syria) a greater degree of autonomy than their other dominions, and both sides benefited: the empire provided a huge market for the Phoenician traders and as a result the cities flourished,¹ while the Persian rulers used Phoenician fleets in their war efforts against the Egyptians and Greeks. A revolt against Persian rule erupted in Sidon in 350 BC, but was crushed by Artaxerxes III, who burnt down the city in 351. After Alexander's conquest of the Phoenician cities in 332 BC, the area was progressively absorbed by Hellenistic civilization, and as a prominent scholar of this period concluded: 'Achaemenid rule allowed the Phoenicians to develop for the last time. The domination of Greeks, whose culture had attracted the Phoenicians even before Alexander's conquest, was more powerful and uncompromising than the Achaemenid, and it progressively destroyed the Phoenician civilization.'²

Another Persian incursion into the Levant occurred under the Sasanian ruler Khusrav II, culminating in the capture of Jerusalem in AD 614 and the removal of the 'true cross' to the Iranian capital, Ctesiphon (in modern-day Baghdad). An echo of this event survives in Lebanese lore in the form of the Christian commemoration of 'Id al-Salib in mid-September, celebrating the return of the 'true cross' from its captivity, but this celebration contains no awareness of a Persian connection. At the time of the Muslim conquest of the Levant, there were Persians in Baalbek and other towns of Syria.³

Although these episodes of a Persian presence in antiquity have left no trace in the popular memory of the Lebanese, Lebanese culture contains a few semiotic elements that can be traced back to contact with Iran.⁴ As for the episodes

1. According to Josette Elayi, 'Persian domination, in spite of the difficulties it produced, paradoxically led to the enrichment of the Phoenician cities, both at the level of the state and at the level of the individual.' See her *Économie des cités phéniciennes sous l'empire perse* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1990), p. 77.
2. Josette Elayi, 'The Phoenician cities in the Persian period', *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*, 12 (1980): 28. See also Josette Elayi, 'L'essor de la Phénicie et le passage de la domination assyro-babylonienne à la domination perse', *Baghdader Mitteilungen*, 9 (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1978): 25–38; H. Jacob Katzenstein, 'Tyre in the early Persian period (539–486 BCE)', *Biblical Archeologist*, 42 (1979): 23–34.
3. al-Balādhuri, translated by Philip Khūri Hitti, *The Origins of the Islamic State* (1916, New York: AMS Press, 1968), pp. 180, 198, 228.
4. Examples include the presence of some Persian syntactical structures in Lebanese Arabic, the relatively common use of the name of the Persian epic hero Rostam (as Rustum), and the toponym Kisrawan, probably traceable to Persian soldiers settled in the region in the seventh century AD by the Umayyad caliph Mu'awiya as a defence

themselves, while they have occasionally been evoked in the context of elaborating a homogenized national narrative and consequently been incorporated into school curricula after the emergence of modern Lebanon, they belong to the realm of 'recovered' (and at times 'invented') history rather than 'remembered' history,⁵ for too many discontinuities separate them from the historical memory of today's Lebanese. For this reason, we have decided to make the migration of Shi'i scholars from Jabal 'Amil (today's south Lebanon) to Iran, which took place under Safavid auspices in the sixteenth century, the starting point of this volume, as this Iranian–'Lebanese' link is the earliest episode to have had ramifications that are tangible in current historical memory. Moreover, it was around AD 1500 that both countries took shape in their present form.

DEFINING IRAN AND LEBANON

In Iran, Shah Isma'il's coronation in 1501 started a state-building process that resulted in a political/geographic entity of which the Islamic Republic of Iran is the latest avatar.⁶ Originally Sunni, the Safavid order espoused an esoteric and messianic form of Shi'ism popular among the Turkoman tribes of Anatolia some time in the fifteenth century. After he had gained power with the help of these tribes, the Qizilbash, Shah Isma'il established the more orthodox *Ithna-ʿashari* (Twelver) Shi'ism as the official religion of the new state,⁷ and under his

against Byzantine raids. See Henri Lammens, 'Les "Perses" du Liban et l'origine des Métoualis', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, 14 (1929): 12–39. The author demonstrates conclusively that these early Persian settlers were not the ancestors of today's Shi'is in the Jabal 'Amil.

5. As defined by Bernard Lewis in his *History: Remembered, Recovered, Invented* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).
6. For a nuanced and careful discussion of the elements of continuity between the Safavid state and modern Iran, see Roger Savory, 'The Emergence of the Modern Persian State under the Safavids', *Īrānshināsi* (Teheran), 2:2 (1971): 1–44.
7. For a study that argues that the spread of orthodox Twelver Shi'ism in Iran began before the Safavids, see Abdoldjavad Falaturi, 'Die Vorbereitung des iranischen Volkes für die Annahme der Schia', in Ulrich Haarmann and Peter Bachmann, eds, *Die islamische Welt zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Festschrift für Hans Robert Roemer zum 65. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1979), pp. 132–45. On Twelver Shi'ism, see Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Yann Richard, *Shi'ite Islam: Polity, Ideology and Creed*, translated by Antonia Nevill (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1995); and Heinz Halm, *Shi'a Islam: From Religion to Revolution* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1997). For an exposition of the faith from a Twelver Shi'i point of view, see 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, *Shi'ite Islam*, translated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977); and Ayatollah Ja'far Sobhani,

successors Qizilbash influence gradually declined,⁸ until by the early seventeenth century Iran in fact became something akin to what Bryan Turner has called, drawing attention to the religious element in nation and state-building, a ‘nation-church-state’.⁹ Most of their subjects being Sunnis, the Safavids called on Arab ulema from Jabal ‘Amil, Mesopotamia and Bahrain to help create a clerical infrastructure, leading to the earliest instance of a ‘remembered’ historical connection between ‘Iran’ and ‘Lebanon’.

If the continuity between the Safavid state and the Islamic Republic is relatively straightforward, defining ‘Lebanon’, or delimiting our use of the term, is more complex. There was of course no territorial jurisdiction by the name of ‘Lebanon’ five centuries ago. It is, however, both conservative and productive to place the origins of modern Lebanon, as a polity and society, in the closing era of Mamluk rule and the beginnings of Ottoman rule – roughly the same period that saw the beginnings of Safavid rule in Iran. In fact, the debate over the history of Lebanon is still unresolved. While both maximalist and minimalist readings – the former proclaiming a moral continuity stretching from a presumed Phoenician golden age through successive ‘occupations’ to the Phoenix-like resurrection of Greater Lebanon, the latter portraying the creation of the modern nation-state of Lebanon as a mere artefact of French colonialism – are largely understood as politically-motivated myth-histories. Lebanese historiography is still unformed as a consistent body of material. It suffers from three main problems. First, beyond the succession of empires and dynasties, there is no consensus about a useful periodization that would chronicle the rise of the antecedents to modern Lebanese society. Second, Lebanese historical writing is laden with a retrospective centre–periphery bias, in which Mount Lebanon (with or without Beirut) is favoured, while the other regions that were indeed made peripheral in 1920 through their annexation to the *Petit*

The Doctrines of Shi‘ism: A Compendium of Imami Beliefs and Practices, translated by Reza Shah-Kazemi (London: I.B.Tauris, 2001).

8. Kathryn Babayan, ‘The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamite Shi‘ism’, *Iranian Studies*, 27:1–4 (1994): 135–61. See also Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order and Societal Change in Shi‘ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 77–82 and 109–21. The Qizilbash of Anatolia evolved into what are today called the Alevi. See Irène Mélikoff, ‘Le problème kizilbaş’, *Turcica*, 6 (1975) and Irène Mélikoff, ‘Bektashi/Kizilbaş: Historical Bipartition and its Consequences’, in Tord Olsson, Elisabeth Özdalga and Catharina Raudvere, eds, *Alevi Identity: Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998), pp. 1–7.
9. Bryan S. Turner, ‘Religion and State-Formation: a Commentary on Recent Debates’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1 (September 1988). By this we mean that the basis of solidarity for society was not any type of ethnicity but rather a shared religion: Twelver Shi‘ism.

Liban, are not included as equal partners in the standard historical narratives. And third, a problematization of the regional context of Lebanon is introduced through a projection of nation-state relations into the past.¹⁰ Any choice of a formative period for modern Lebanese history, as well as of a delineation of the physical extent of a Lebanese unit, is thus a compromise. For the purpose of this book, we posit that the affirmation of the Druze emirate of Mount Lebanon under Ottoman rule, and its relative regional power and influence, constitute a point of departure for modern Lebanon.¹¹ Our choice is bolstered by the fact that the main episode of substantive contact between Iran and Jabal ‘Amil, a socio-cultural and political unit then adjacent to the Lebanon-in-formation but not part of it, belongs to this era. It is naturally this episode that is of concern for the topic of this book. And while characterizing it as part of ‘Iranian–Lebanese’ relations without qualification would be anachronistic, its importance in creating the Shi‘i clerical network with the shrine cities of Iraq (Karbala, Najaf, Kazimayn and Samarra), collectively known as ‘Atabat, and both modern Lebanon and Iran as tributaries and beneficiaries, makes it indeed the appropriate starting point for any reasoned study of Lebanese–Iranian relations.¹² With this *caveat emptor*, our use of the term

10. For in-depth discussions, see Ahmad Beydoun, *Identité confessionnelle et temps social chez les historiens libanais contemporains* (Beirut: Publications de l’Université Libanaise, 1984); Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); and Axel Havemann, *Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung im Libanon des 19 und 20 Jahrhunderts: Formen und Funktionen des historischen Selbstverständnisses* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 2002). For shorter studies see Nadim Shehadi, *The Idea of Lebanon: Economy and State in the Cénacle Libanais 1946–54* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1987); Axel Havemann, ‘Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung im Libanon, Kamāl Salībī und die nationale Identität’, in Axel Havemann and Baber Johansen, eds, *Gegenwart als Geschichte: Islamwissenschaftliche Studien Fritz Steppat zum fünfundsiebzigsten Geburtstag* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), pp. 225–43; and Axel Havemann, ‘Lebanon’s Ottoman Past as Reflected in Modern Lebanese Historiography’, in Rainer Brunner, Monika Gronke, Jens Peter Laut and Ulrich Rebstock, eds, *Islamstudien ohne Ende: Festschrift für Werner Ende zum 65. Geburtstag* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), pp. 161–74. Similar problems arise with Iran, except that the range of possible options is narrower and the issue boils down to how much continuity one posits with pre-Islamic Iran. See Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran, Orientalism, Occidentalism and Historiography* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
11. See Abdul-Rahim Abu-Husayn, *The View from Istanbul: Ottoman Lebanon and the Druze Emirate* (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies in association with I.B.Tauris, 2004).
12. Iranians and Lebanese who, for ideological reasons, privilege the pre-Islamic heritage of their countries, could extend a history of their relations to ancient times. See, for

‘Lebanon’ should be understood as a reference to the regions that became in 1920 constituent components of the modern nation-state of Lebanon.

CLERICAL MIGRATION FROM JABAL ʿAMIL TO IRAN

The late Albert Hourani was the first to stress the importance of this first episode of substantive contact between what is now southern Lebanon and Iran.¹³ His ‘From Jabal ʿĀmil to Persia’, reprinted in this collection, provides the reader with an overview of the historical and cultural background as well as the political incentives that led to the encounter. Hourani depicts the evolution of ʿAmili society and its scholarship ‘between tolerance and persecution’ and describes the framework within which ʿAmili ulema were integrated in Safavid Iran.

A few years after its initial publication doubts were raised about the scope and importance of this migration,¹⁴ but subsequent scholarship reasserted its importance.¹⁵ Hourani’s ideas are further strengthened and developed by Rula Abisaab who, in Chapter 3, takes us back to one of the most formative episodes of Lebanese history, the Mamluk Kisrawan campaigns of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and argues convincingly that at the time most of that region’s inhabitants were Twelver Shiʿis. Under Mamluk and later Ottoman rule, she maintains, the flourishing of a native scholastic tradition was difficult but not impossible. While Mamluk and Ottoman authorities made no systematic attempts to eradicate

instance, an article on Lebanese–Iranian relations to commemorate the 2500th year anniversary celebrations of the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great by Maurice Chehab, director of archeology in Lebanon, in which he dwelt heavily on pre-Islamic times but mentioned the Amili emigration to Iran only in the last paragraph. ‘Taʿṣīr-i farhang va tamaddun-i irānī bar karānahā-yi sarzamīn-i Lubnān’, *Barrasīhā-yi tārikhī*, 7:2 (Khurdād-Tīr 1351/May–July 1972): 15–22. These celebrations, the apotheosis of the Pahlavi era’s glorification of ancient Iran, made a certain impression on at least some Lebanese. Thus the sister of the Lebanese ambassador visited the minister of the Court, Amir Asadollah Alam, on 24 May 1972, less than a year after the celebrations, to discuss holding a similar celebration in honour of the ancient city of Tyre. ʿAlīnaqī ʿĀlīkhānī, ed., *Yaddāshthā-yi ʿĀlam*, vol. 2 (n.p.: New World Ltd, 1993), p. 248.

13. Albert Hourani, ‘From Jabal ʿĀmil to Persia’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 49:1 (1986): 133–40.
14. Andrew Newman, ‘The Myth of the Clerical Migration to Safawid Iran’, *Die Welt des Islams*, 33 (1993): 66–112.
15. Rula Jurdi Abisaab, ‘The Ulama of Jabal ʿAmil in Safavid Iran, 1501–1736: Marginality, Migration and Social Change’, *Iranian Studies*, 27:1–4 (1994): 103–22; and Devin J. Stewart, ‘Notes on the Migration of ʿĀmili Scholars to Safavid Iran’, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 55:2 (1996): 81–103.

Shiʿism, the precarious environment in which ʿAmili scholars struggled and survived made the Safavid invitation attractive to them.

The Safavids’ political vision and the requirements of a newly emerging Shiʿi society extended to the ʿAmilis the possibility of migration from Ottoman Syria to Iran and secured their succession to the first offices of *shaykh al-Islam* under the Safavids. In total, about 156 high-ranking clerics from the Jabal ʿAmil were living in Iran at the close of the Safavid era.¹⁶ Abisaab questions much of the Orientalist literature and the nationalist scholarship coming out of Lebanon and Iran, first on the approaches that the Mamluks and Ottomans took towards Twelver Shiʿis, and second, on the scope of ʿAmili clerical emigration to Iran and its religious and political implications for Iran. Orientalist literature reduces the social and political complexity of Jabal ʿAmil’s history to the unfolding of hostile Sunni policies of persecution of Twelver Shiʿis,¹⁷ but Abisaab emphasizes the fluid boundaries between various forms of Shiʿism and Sunnism, and the political constructions of ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘heterodoxy’, and shows that they were constantly redefined and negotiated. New scholarship on the Lebanese side boasts of the ‘export’ of a ‘high’ tradition of Twelver Shiʿism to Iran, which, they allege, had none.¹⁸ These assertions should not be seen as scholarly breakthroughs but rather as a reflection of the rehabilitation of the history of the Lebanese Shiʿi community, which until recently was described, implicitly or explicitly, as subsidiary to or derivative of the main currents that merge into a ‘Lebanese’ historical narrative, a narrative that effectively elevates the Maronite community, or alternatively the Maronite and Sunni communities, to the status of sole or main agents in Lebanese history. These boasts are therefore better understood outside the confines of any Arab–Iranian polemics or ‘Lebanocentrism’; rather, they should be regarded as expressions of a claim to historical agency by a community denied any central role in national history. On the Iranian side, the historiography is dominated by cultural determinists and nationalist scholars who consider legalistic Shiʿism ‘endemically’ alien to the Iranian intellectual and cultural landscape, and denounce Arab ʿAmili

16. For details see Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2004), pp. 302–14.
17. See Urbain Vermeulen, ‘The Rescript Against the Shiʿites and Rafidites of Beirut, Saida and District (746 AH/1363 AD)’, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*, 4 (1973): 169–71; C. H. Imber, ‘The Persecution of the Ottoman Shiʿites according to the mühimme defterleri, 1565–1585’, *Der Islam*, 56 (1979): 245–73. See also Jaʿfar al-Muhājir, *Al-hijra al-ʿĀmiliyya ilā Īrān fī al-ʿaṣr al-Ṣafawī* (Beirut: Dār al-Rawḍa, 1989), pp. 73, 94–8.
18. See ʿAlī Murūwwa, *Al-tashayyūʿ bayna Jabal ʿĀmil wa Īrān* (London: Riyāʿ al-Rayyis li’l-kutub wa al-nashr, 1987); and ʿAlī Ibrāhīm Darwīsh, *Jabal ʿĀmil bayna 1516–1697* (Beirut: Dār al-Hādī, 1993).

‘hegemony’ over religious life in Iran and the imposition of clerical discipline.¹⁹ Abisaab argues that the ideas of the ‘Amili *émigré* scholars of Iran took a new life and form that was shaped not by a Syrian reality or cultural traits but rather by the needs of the Safavid state, the social demands of Iranian society, and the professional ambitions of the clerics themselves, to conclude that without the consent of a large sector of Iranian society and its appropriation of clerical Shi‘ism, ‘Amili efforts could not have persisted beyond the mid-sixteenth century.

While ‘Amili ulema migrated eastwards, another migration took Iranians to the Levant. Following the capture of northwestern Iran by Süleyman the Magnificent in 1534, the Ottoman ruler settled a group of people from the Tabriz area on the northern reaches of Mount Lebanon. These settlers were the ancestors of the Shi‘i Hemadeh clan of Jubayl (Byblos).²⁰

In the eighteenth and ‘long’ nineteenth century, political upheavals took a toll on both Iran and the Jabal ‘Amil. The demise of the Safavids in 1722 ushered in a period of political instability that ended only with the advent of the Qajar dynasty in 1796. In Ottoman Syria, Jabal ‘Amil was devastated by the Ottoman governor of Akka (Acre), Ahmad Pasha, whose brutal suppression in 1783 of the rebellion of Dahir al-Umar, whom ‘Amili clan leaders had supported, earned him the sobriquet al-Jazzar, ‘the butcher’. Local chronicles report the burning of libraries and destructions of *madrasas*. One ‘Amili religious leader, Shaykh Ali al-Zayn, left his home for Iraq and then continued to Iran, where the first Qajar ruler, Agha Mohammad Khan (ruled 1785–97), ‘received him well.’²¹ But henceforth relations between ulema from Jabal ‘Amil and Iran were mediated by the ‘Atabat, whose *madrasas*, especially those of Najaf, attracted teachers and students from across the Shi‘i world.²²

19. Ali ibn Abd al-Ali al-Karaki (died 940/1533) was the first major scholar to emigrate to Safavid Iran from Jabal ‘Amil via Iraq. He is described in leading Safavid chronicles as the ‘inventor of the Shi‘i religion’. The mid-seventeenth century intellectual debates and political clashes between conventional ‘Amili jurists and Persian scholars of a philosophical or Sufi bent have been recast either in essentialist culturalist terms or nationalist forms by modern scholars who fail to understand that doctrines and juridical practices promoted by the *émigré* state clerics find their origins and justification in the very Safavid Iran where these jurists lived, developed and became Iranian. See Chapter 3, n148 for representative examples of these trends in scholarship.

20. Abu-Husayn, *The View from Istanbul*, pp. 9–10, 106 n15.

21. Muḥammad Jābir Āl Šafā, *Tārīkh Jabal ‘Āmil* ([Beirut]: Dār Matn al-lugha, n.d.), p. 139, as quoted in Waddah Chrara, *Transformations d’une manifestation religieuse dans un village du Liban-Sud (Ashura)* (Beirut: Publications du Centre de Recherches de l’Université Libanaise, Institut des Sciences Sociales, 1968), pp. 9–10.

22. For a brief history of the *madrasas* of Najaf, see Mohammad Fadhil Jamali, ‘The Theological Colleges of Najaf’, *The Moslem World*, 50:1 (January 1960): 15–22. For a

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The nineteenth century witnessed an economic reinvigoration in the eastern Mediterranean, brought about by the Ottoman reforms (the *Tanzimat*) and improving trading arrangements with Europe. With Iran’s opening to the outside world that went hand in hand with the relative stability provided by the Qajar dynasty (1796–1925), contact between Iran and Lebanon became easier. The treaties of Erzerum (1823 and 1847) and Berlin (1878) laid the ground for an improvement of Ottoman–Iranian relations, although minor border problems and Ottoman treatment of Shi‘is in Iraq remained a constant irritant.²³ ‘Amili Shi‘is, however, were dealt with less harshly by the Ottomans than those of Iraq and eastern Arabia – perhaps because they were less likely to be suspected of making common cause with Iran.²⁴

During the Hamidian era (1876–1908) relations between the last two sovereign Muslim states were so courteous that after 1880 Iranian consuls were routinely listed first on the consular lists of annual Ottoman *salnames*.²⁵ Iran maintained a

concise and critical account by a seminarian of the curriculum of the *madrasas*, see Un Mésopotamien, ‘Le programme des études chez les chiites et principalement ceux de Nedjef’, *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 23 (June 1913): 268–79. For more recent discussions, see Peter Heine, ‘Traditionelle Formen und Institutionen schiitischer Erziehung in der Gegenwart am Beispiel der Stadt Nadjaf/Iraq’, *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, 74:3 (1990): 204–18; Meir Litvak, ‘Madrasa and Learning in 19th Century Najaf and Karbalā’, in Rainer Brunner and Werner Ende, eds, *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times: Religious Culture and Political History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), pp. 58–78; and Sabrina Mervin, ‘La quête du savoir à Nağaf. Les études religieuses chez les chi‘ites imāmītes de la fin du XIXe siècle’, in *Studia Islamica*, 81 (1995): 165–85. For a discussion of the role of some ‘Amili clerics in Najaf, see Sabrina Mervin, ‘The Clerics of Jabal ‘Āmil and the Reform of Religious Teaching in Najaf since the Beginning of the 20th Century’, in Brunner and Ende, eds, *The Twelver Shia*, pp. 79–86.

23. On the gradual settlement of these, see Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *The Foreign Policy of Iran, 1500–1941: A Developing Nation in World Affairs* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1966), pp. 53–6. See also Anja Pistor-Hatam, ‘*Tanzīmāt* oder *Ittihād*: Zwei Konzepte osmanisch-persischer Einigung’, *Turcica*, 24 (1994): 247–61.

24. Juan Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War: The Politics, Culture, and History of Shi‘ite Islam* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2002), especially Chapter 2, ‘The Shi‘ites as an Ottoman Minority’ and Chapter 6 (co-authored with Moojan Momen) ‘Mafia, Mob and Shi‘ism in Iraq’.

25. Johann Strauss, ‘La présence diplomatique iranienne à Istanbul et dans les provinces de l’Empire Ottoman (1848–1908)’, in Th. Zarcone and F. Zarinebaf-Shahr, eds, *Les Iraniens d’Istanbul* (Louvain: Peeters, 1993), p. 14. On relations in the second half of the nineteenth century, see Mohammad Reza Nasiri, *Nāsireddīn Šah Zamanunda*

wide network of consulates in the Ottoman Empire, including Beirut, Sidon and Tripoli. In Sidon members of the Shi'i Osseiran family traditionally acted as consular agents. In Beirut that role devolved on the Greek-Orthodox Sursok family, and Christians also represented Iran in Tripoli,²⁶ which shows that the Iranian state did not deal exclusively with Shi'is.

Interest in Iran also grew with the 'globalized' intellectual environment of the Arab east of the late nineteenth century. Pan-Islamic ideas advocated by Jamaledin al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh,²⁷ as well as a growing sense of Arab renaissance (*Nahda*) promoting an amalgamation of authenticity and modernity, fostered an awareness of and an interest in the Iranian experimentation with constitutionalism. The new interest in Iran was further strengthened by the Islamic ecumenical movement *al-taqrib bayna al-madhahib*, which sought to reduce sectarian tensions between the two main branches of Islam. In response to this movement, and in an effort to present Shi'ism as consistent with common Islamic norms, the celebrated 'Amili scholar Muhsin al-Amin engaged in an effort to question the Muharram commemoration practices in Jabal 'Amil as innovations.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, a number of Iranian families settled in the cities of Lebanon as merchants, tobacco growers and coffeeshouse owners.²⁸ In his autobiography, Muhsin al-Amin noted that he learned a few Persian words 'from an Iraqi who spoke this language with [his] maternal uncle'.²⁹ But the general Shi'i population soon assimilated these Iranians (who may in fact have been Persian residents of Ottoman Iraq), and surnames like Ajami and Irani are reminders of that immigration.³⁰ One lasting legacy of the Iranians' presence was the introduction to Lebanese Shi'is of Muharram mourning rituals, commemorating

Osmanlı-İran Münasebetleri (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1991).

26. Strauss, 'La présence diplomatique iranienne à Istanbul', pp. 23, 28–32.

27. On the former see Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal al-Din 'al-Afghani'* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968) and Nikki R. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal al-Din 'al-Afghani'* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

28. According to Frédéric Maatouk there were about twenty families in Nabatiyya. See his *La Représentation de la mort de l'Imam Hussein à Nabatieh* (Beirut: Université Libanaise, 1974), p. 42.

29. Muhsin al-Amīn, *Autobiographie d'un clerc chiite du Ġabal 'Āmil*, translation and annotations by Sabrina Mervin and Haitham al-Amin (Damascus: Institut Français d'Études Arabes de Damas, 1998), p. 107.

30. Bärbel Reuter, *Ašura-Feiern im Libanon: zum politischen Potential eines religiösen Festes* (Münster: LIT, 1993), pp. 54–5; and Sabrina Mervin, *Un réformisme chiite: Ulémas et lettrés du Ġabal 'Āmil (actuel Liban-Sud) de la fin de l'Empire ottoman à l'indépendance du Liban* (Paris: Karthala, 2000), pp. 245–8.

the martyrdom of the third Shi'i Imam, Husayn ibn Ali, at Karbala in the year AD 680, typically associated with Iran, such as self-flagellation and passion plays. The passion play, in particular, developed in Iran,³¹ from which it spread first to Iraq and then to Lebanon.³² When Muhsin al-Amin denounced these rituals as contrary to the spirit of Islam, a number of others rose to their defence, setting off a polemic that lasted for many years.³³

In 1933 Muhsin al-Amin visited Iran, and wrote about the country's cities and shrines in a travel book covering both Iraq and Iran. After noting that Iranians are a people of special politeness, he gainsays those who impugn Iranians' lack of generosity: 'Some people chide Iranians for being stingy. This is unjust and unfair; they are among the most generous people in following God's commandments. The truth is that while they are munificent, they are frugal when it is warranted, and generous when generosity is required. An ignorant might mistake frugality for stinginess.'³⁴ What struck him most, however, were Iranians' consumption habits:

Any nation, however praiseworthy its qualities, is bound to have defects, since perfection for other than God is impossible: Iranians smoke opium, it is so widespread in Iran amongst all classes, it has even reached the houses of learning, may God inspire them to quit it. ... Iranians are fond of drinking tea, morning and evening, men, women, and children, young and old, learned and ignorant, rich and poor. One wishes they would have been content with tea and had abandoned smoking opium.³⁵

31. See Peter J. Chelkowski, ed., *Ta'zieh: Ritual and Drama in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1979). The books contain chapters on other countries as well.

32. On the Iraqi passion plays see Ibrahim al-Haidari, *Zur Soziologie des schiitischen Chiasmus: Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung des irakischen Passionsspiels* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1975); and Peter Heine, 'Aspects of the Social Structure of Shiite Society in Modern Iraq', in Brunner and Ende, eds, *The Twelver Shia*, pp. 87–93. On Lebanon see Emrys Peters, 'A Muslim Passion Play: Key to a Lebanese Village', *The Atlantic*, 198:4 (October 1956); Maatouk, *La Représentation de la mort de l'Imam Hussein à Nabatieh*; Ibrahim al-Haidari, 'Die Ta'zia, das schiitische Passionsspiel im Libanon', *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Supplement III, 1 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1977), pp. 430–7; and Reuter, *Ašura-Feiern im Libanon*, pp. 59–111, *passim*.

33. Mervin, *Un réformisme chiite*, Chapter 6, 'La lutte contre les innovations blâmables et la réforme des rites de 'Āšūrā'. This work supersedes Werner Ende's 'The Flagellations of Muharram and the Shi'ite 'Ulamā'', *Der Islam*, 55:1 (March 1978): 19–36.

34. Muhsin al-Husaynī al-'Āmilī, *Riḥlāt al-sayyid Muhsin al-Amīn* (S.l.: n.p., 1974), pp. 222 and 229.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 223–4 and 226. On the use of opium in Iran see Elizabeth P. MacCallan,

Muhsin al-Amin's attack on folk rituals caught the eye of a 20-year-old seminarian in Iran, who in 1943 published his first work, a little booklet titled 'Azādārīhā-ye nāmashrūc' (Illegitimate mourning), a Persian translation of Muhsin al-Amin's *Al-tanzīh li-a'māl al-shabīh*. The son of a cleric, this young seminarian had spent a few months in Najaf, where he had probably come across the book. Within two days the booklet was sold out, but the author's joy was premature, for it transpired that pious *bazaari* friends of his father's had bought the entire stock and burned it. The young admirer of Muhsin al-Amin was none other than Jalal Al-e Ahmad,³⁶ the Iranian writer and essayist who would much later become the ideologue of the struggle against what he called *gharbzadegi*, 'Westoxication'.³⁷ A few months later Al-e Ahmad abandoned clerical garb and joined the communist Tudeh party, which he left in 1948 to become an independent secular leftist.³⁸ His first work was not published again in Iran until 1992.³⁹ This edition also includes a talk on Muhsin al-Amin by Ali Shariati given in the autumn of 1972 at the Hoseiniyeh Ershad Institute in Teheran, in which the modernist ideologue praised the reformist *'alim* for his social activism in Lebanon: at a time, Shariati said, when the ulema did not object to self-mortification but considered giving an education to girls a cardinal sin, Muhsin al-Amin had founded a school for girls, which was a

Twenty Years of Persian Opium (1908–1928): A Study (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1928) and Schams Anvari-Alhosseyni, 'Über Haschisch und Opium im Iran', in Gisela Völger, ed., *Rausch und Realität: Drogen im Kulturvergleich* (Cologne: Rautenstrauch und Joest, 1981).

36. Al-e Ahmad tells the story in his autobiographical sketch: Jalāl Āl-i Aḥmad, *Yak chāh va du chālah va mathalan sharḥ-i aḥvālāt* (Teheran: Ravvāq, 1343/1964), pp. 48–9. *Bazaari* merchants are of course major sponsors of Muharram rituals in Iran.
37. His book by the same name appeared in 1961. For an English translation see Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Gharbzadegi* (*Weststruckness*), translated by John Green and Ahmad Alizadeh (Lexington, Ky.: Mazda, 1982). For critical studies of Al-e Ahmad see Brad Hanson, 'The Westoxication of Iran: Depiction, and Reaction of Behrangi, Al-e Ahmad and Shariati', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 15 (1983); Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), pp. 105–15; Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), Chapter 1 'Jalal Al-e Ahmad: The Dawn of "the Islamic Ideology"', pp. 39–101; and Farzin Vahdat, 'Return to which Self? Jalal Al-e Ahmad and the Discourse of Modernity', *Journal of Iranian Research and Analysis*, 16:2 (November 2000): 55–71.
38. Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent*, pp. 44–6.
39. 'Allāma Āyat Allāh Muḥsin Amīn, 'Azādārīhā-yi nāmashrūc', translated by Jalāl Āl-i Aḥmad, edited with an introduction by Sayyid Qāsim Yāḥūsaynī (Bushehr: Daryā, 1371/1992).

revolutionary act.⁴⁰ In fact, admiration for Lebanese educational establishments had a long history in Iran.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEIRUT AS AN EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

In the early sixteenth century, European Christian missionaries, encouraged by the tolerant policies of Amir Fakhreddin II (ruled 1590–1635), began to help Lebanon's Christian communities establish schools. The movement grew after 1840, for the mild climate and large Christian populations attracted increasing numbers of missionaries who started schools at all levels.⁴¹ The Syrian Protestant College (renamed American University of Beirut in 1920) was established in 1866, and a Jesuit college founded in 1843 became the French-language Université Saint-Joseph in 1875. Both soon attracted large numbers of Iranians. We must remember that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries educated Iranians were less estranged from the Arabic language than they would be in the years following the Second World War, when Reza Shah's de-Arabizing policies began to show their effect.⁴² Any Iranian who had been educated before the 1930s had a good reading knowledge of Arabic,⁴³ and even an intellectual like Ahmad Kasravi, often considered the ideologue of Iranian nationalism,⁴⁴ drew on Bustani's encyclopaedia as a source of information about the West.⁴⁵ Although the instruction provided at SPC/AUB and Saint-Joseph was dispensed not in Arabic but in English and French respectively, their familiarity with Arabic must have helped the early students from Iran feel more at home than they would have felt in Europe.

40. Ibid., p. 35. Shariati's talk is also reprinted in vol. 31 of his collected works. 'Alī Sharī'atī, *Vīzhagīhā-yi qurūn-i jadīd* (Teheran: Chāp-i Āshnā, 1361/1982), pp. 527–42.
41. Theodor Hanf, *Erziehungswesen in Gesellschaft und Politik des Libanon* (Bielefeld: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1969), pp. 60–74.
42. One telling example is Sediqeh Dowlatbadi (1882–1961), one of Iran's first feminists. Born into a learned family with Babi sympathies, she started Persian and Arabic lessons at the age of six with a cleric by the name of Aqa Shaykh Mohammad Raffīc who had studied Arabic in Beirut. According to her, he was the first Iranian cleric to have gone to Beirut. Mahdūkt Ṣan'atī and Afsānah Najm'ābādī, eds, *Ṣadīqa Dawlat'ābādī: Nāmāhā, nivishtahā, va yādāhā*, vol. 3 (Chicago: Midland Press, 1998), p. 614. We are grateful to Afsaneh Najmabadi for pointing this source out to us.
43. In the early 1960s, Marvin Zonis found that members of Iran's political elite were more likely to know Arabic the older they were. See his *The Political Elite of Iran* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 153–4.
44. See Ervand Abrahamian, 'Kasravi: The Integrative Nationalist of Iran', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 9 (1973): 271–95.
45. On this work see Albert Hourani, 'Bustānī's Encyclopaedia', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1:1 (1990): 111–19.

Going to study in Beirut was for a young Iranian a way to get a modern Western education without leaving the Muslim world. As one of the earliest Iranian students at AUB put it, ‘the city of Beirut was in those days the ‘abode of learning in the Ottoman Empire’ (*dār al-‘ilm-i mamlakat-i uthmānī*).⁴⁶ A former Iranian prime minister said that ‘Beirut is an important publishing centre, and its schools and hospitals draw attention from far and near. A number of young Iranians study here; Firuz Mirza and other sons of [Prince] Farmanfarma are among them.’⁴⁷ The importance of Lebanon’s educational establishments for the formation of Iran’s secular intellectual and political elite cannot be over estimated.

The founder of modern Persian prose literature, Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh (1895–1997), who was born in Isfahan into a Seyyed family from Hamadan that traced its origins to the Jabal ‘Amil, was sent to Beirut in 1908, accompanied by two sons of a member of parliament.⁴⁸ He attended the Lazarist school in Antoura until 1910, and it was there that he engaged in his first literary endeavours. In an autobiographical essay he wrote: ‘It was [at Antoura] that I had my first experience with writing. Together with a fellow student by the name of Wajih Khoury we published a hand-written newspaper in French by the name of *La Devisé*.’

He continued that once he wrote a humorous essay for another boy’s birthday and that it fell into the hands of a stern priest. He was afraid of being punished, but the priest read out the essay in a rhetoric class for older pupils and everybody had a good laugh. His composition teachers called his writings ‘original’, and offered him a scholarship to continue his studies at another Lazarist school in Lille, in the hope that he would then write for the newspaper *La Croix*. But he unwittingly ruined his chances when the class was told to write an essay on ‘Whom would you like to be like?’ Most pupils chose Saint Vincent de Paul, the founder of the order, as their role model, but Jamalzadeh wrote that he wanted to be like Voltaire. Not that he knew much about François-Marie Arouet, but the French newspaper *Le Matin* had called his father, the constitutionalist activist S. Jamal Va‘ez, the Voltaire of Iran.⁴⁹ It was in Beirut that the young Jamalzadeh learned of his father’s execution in Teheran during the counterrevolutionary regime of Mohammad Ali Shah, and shortly thereafter he went to Europe,⁵⁰ eventually settling in Geneva

46. Duktur Yūnis Afrūkhtah, *Khāfirāt-i nuḥ sālāh* (reprint, Los Angeles: Kalimāt Press, 1983), p. 493.

47. Mahdīqulī Hidāyat, *Safarnāmah-yi tasharruf bah Makkah-yi mu‘azzama* (Teheran: Chāpkhānah-yi Majlis, n.d.).

48. *Rāhnāmā-yi kitāb*, nos 3–4 (Khurdād-Tīr 1349/May–July 1970), p. 168.

49. On him see Mangol Bayat, *Iran’s First Revolution: Shi‘ism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1909* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 62, 168–9, 256–8.

50. [Muḥammad-‘Alī Jamālzādah], ‘Sharḥ-i ḥāl-i āqā-yi Jamālzādah’, *Nashriyya-yi*

where he died.⁵¹ It is of course dangerous to read too much into one minor novel, but it may be an indication of the general appreciation of Lebanon by modernist intellectuals of the 1920s that the first utopia ever published in Iran, a novel titled *The Assembly of the Lunatics*, places the capital of a politically unified ideal world lying 2000 years in the future in Mount Lebanon.⁵²

In politics, most famously, the last Shah’s longest serving prime minister (1965–77), Amir Abbas Hoveyda (1917–79), and his brother Fereydoun (born 1924), who was Iranian ambassador to the United Nations in the 1970s, both attended the Lycée Français in Beirut. The former recalled that in one of Lebanon’s cabinets, ‘of the twelve ministers, seven had been [his] classmates’.⁵³ The latter wrote a *roman à clef* after the revolution about his generation of Iranians and Lebanese and their interaction in the Middle East.⁵⁴ Another graduate of the French lycée was the Shah’s last prime minister, Shapur Bakhtiar (1914–92), who was in Beirut in the 1930s and had this to say about Lebanon in his reminiscences, published after the revolution in his Parisian exile:

I had simultaneously to prepare myself for the baccalaureate and to learn Arabic. There was not enough time for me to learn that language well. I speak a bit and I know the Koran, that’s all. As my second language I chose German. ... In Beirut I went out very little, and submitted myself to an iron discipline. Nonetheless, I was able to get to know the Lebanon of the happy years, this marvellous and peaceful country that practised coexistence between different religious communities. The events of the last few years

dānishkadah-yi adabiyāt-i Tabrīz, 6:3 (Ādhar 1333/November–December 1954): 269–70.

51. For an early appreciation see Roger Lescot, ‘Le roman et la nouvelle dans la littérature iranienne contemporaine’, *Bulletin d’Etudes Orientales* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1942–43): 84–5. For an in-depth analysis of Jamalzadeh’s literary career see Hassan Kamshad, *Modern Persian Prose Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966, reprinted: Bethesda: Iranbooks, 1996), pp. 91–112. His masterpiece, a collection of early short stories originally published in 1921, is available in English as Mohammad Ali Jamalzada, *Once Upon a Time*, translated by Heshmat Moayyad and Paul Sprachman (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1985).

52. Šan‘atūzādah Kirmānī, *Majma‘-i divānagān* (Teheran: Kitābkhānah-yi Muḥaffariyya, 1303/1924), pp. 25–6.

53. Abbas Milani, *The Persian Sphinx: Amir Abbas Hoveyda and the Riddle of the Iranian Revolution* (Washington, DC: Mage, 2000), p. 60.

54. Fereydoun Hoveyda, *Les nuits féodales: tribulations d’un persan au Moyen Orient* (Paris: Scarabée & Co/A. M. Métailié, 1983). The younger Hoveyda is a francophone man of letters who has published not only fiction but also a highly regarded history of the detective novel.

break my heart. The photos of Beirut ruined by bombs and street fighting are for me those of a paradise lost. I remember having gone skiing and having bathed in the sea on the same day: this was easily done given the proximity between the mountains and the sea. Those mountains I hiked in all its length, from the Turkish border to Palestine.⁵⁵

The role French schools played in the formation of the Iranian elite deserves more systematic attention than we are giving it in this book, in which we include two chapters that focus on the American University of Beirut.

Although students of all backgrounds were exposed to Protestant Christianity at the Syrian Protestant College, it was open to adherents of all religions. At the groundbreaking ceremony of College Hall on 7 December 1871 President Daniel Bliss said: 'This College is for all conditions and classes of men without regard to colour, nationality, race or religion. A man white, black or yellow; Christian, Jew, Mohammedan or heathen, may enter and enjoy all the advantages of this institution ... and go out believing in one God, in many gods, or in no god.'⁵⁶

Although this tolerance of other faiths was not uncontested, it ultimately prevailed,⁵⁷ and as a result the college attracted many Muslims, including Iranians. The staff of the Syrian Protestant College were aware of their role in educating Iranians. In an SPC pamphlet published in 1910, the author first notes that a 'new era' had dawned in Iran as a result of the constitutional revolution of 1906, and continues: 'Until Persia has its own Christian college and universities our college ought to minister and powerfully minister to her needs.'⁵⁸

In the autumn of 1923, Ahmad Shah, the last ruler of the Qajar dynasty (ruled

55. Chapour Bakhtiar, *Ma fidélité* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1982), p. 22.

56. Samir Khalaf, 'New England Puritanism and Liberal Education in the Middle East: The American University of Beirut as a Cultural Transplant', in Şerif Mardin, ed., *Cultural Transitions in the Middle East* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), p. 67. Bliss added that it would be impossible for any graduate not to know what the founders believed to be the truth.

57. See Elie Kedourie, 'The American University of Beirut', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 3:1 (1966): 74–90, where the tug of war between adherents of evangelization and education is discussed.

58. *The Expansion of the Syrian Protestant College, Beirût, Syria* (n.p.: printed for the trustees, 1910), pp. 5–6. Iran did indeed have a college similar to AUB for a short while, for in 1929 the old Presbyterian high school of Teheran became Alborz College. For a brief history see *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 'Alborz College', s.v. However, the college never gained the stature of AUB, and in 1940 the Iranian state forced the Americans to sell the college, upon which it became an Iranian high school – albeit the best in the land. See Mīr Asad Allāh Mūsavī Mākū'i, *Dabīristān-i Alburz va shabānahrūzī-yi ān* (Teheran: Bīsūtūn, 1378/1999), pp. 15–17.

1909–25), visited AUB on his way to Europe, a trip from which he was not to return. As recorded by the university's president:

Soon after the opening of the academic year, the University was honored by a visit from His Majesty, the Shah of Persia, who was impressed by the useful service the institution might render to the young men of this country. For the first time our catalogue is being printed in Persian, and a real attempt is being made to interest these Shi'ite Moslems in modern education. Twenty-two students have been enrolled from Persia the past year.

Vast undeveloped territories are waiting for leadership and are looking to our university to train their men. It is thrilling to think of the part that we can play in sending forth men of spiritual power to restore the lands of Cyrus ... and their ancient glory.⁵⁹

Some came to attend preparatory school:

Two Persian students, one from Teheran, the other from Hamadan, were sent here by their grandmothers, one of whom is a princess and the other a countess (*sic*). They are large landowners. The boys are twelve and fourteen years of age. They arrived at the School a year ago, about one month before the close of the year. In those far off countries not much account is paid to the times and seasons for the opening and closing of schools. The grandparents wish to have the boys trained. They have come to believe that this School is able to do that and to return their sons as grown men with a suitable education and with characters that can be relied upon.⁶⁰

In the early 1960s Iranians constituted the largest group of non-Arabs at AUB, although Germany in the 1950s and the United States in the 1960s attracted the largest number of Iranian students.⁶¹

Many Iranian graduates of Lebanese schools subsequently rendered valuable services to the development of education in Iran. Perhaps the first was Mirza Hasan Tabrizi Roshdiyyeh (1851–1944), the son of a high-ranking cleric from Tabriz, who intended to go to Najaf in order to conclude his religious education but instead

59. *Report of the President of the American University of Beirut, Beirut, Syria for the Fifty-Eighth Year 1923–1924*, pp. 8–9.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

61. In 1958–59 there were 4000 students in Germany, 3700 in the United States, 800 in France, 600 in Great Britain, 250 in Switzerland, and 166 in Lebanon. Reza Arasteh, 'The Education of Iranian Leaders in Europe and America', *International Review of Education*, 8:3–4 (1963): 448.

decided to acquire a secular education after he had become aware of the gap in literacy rates between Iran and Europe. First he went to Istanbul, then to Cairo, but he found what he was looking for only in Beirut, where he spent two years. In his son's words:

The teaching style of Beirut's French university had had an impact on the state of education there, and Beirutis themselves had schools that were both Islamic and modern.

Roshdiyyeh entered one of these schools in [1881] and learned the principles and methods of modern education from the French-trained teachers. In [1883] he left Beirut [and] returned to Iran via Istanbul ... [where] he studied the schools that were based on modern principles.⁶²

After founding a school for Iranian expatriates in Yerevan, he finally arrived in Iran in 1888, and established Iran's first modern elementary school in Tabriz, followed in 1898 by one in Teheran. These schools became the model for Iran's incipient public educational system.⁶³

In the sciences, the man commonly known as the 'father of Iranian physics', Mahmud Hesabi (1903–92), grew up in Lebanon. He was born in Teheran, but his family moved to Beirut in 1907 when his father became consul in that city. He stayed in Beirut with his mother and brother after his father returned to Iran, and attended first a Catholic French school and then SPC. He then worked as an engineer near the Syrian border with a French construction company that sent him to Paris for further study in 1924. He received a doctorate in physics in 1927 and, upon his return to Iran, he took a leading role in founding Teheran's teachers' training college and Iran's first university, the University of Teheran, and was minister of education in one of Mosaddeq's cabinets.⁶⁴

62. Shams al-Dīn Rushdiyya, *Savānīh-i ʿumr* (Teheran: Nashr-i Tārīkh, 1362/1983), pp. 12 and 23.

63. Following the Ottoman *Rüşdiyye* school (from Arabic *rushd* 'development'), he called his schools *roshdiyyeh*, finally taking that as his surname as well. These schools met with a lot of traditionalist hostility and were occasionally destroyed by clerically instigated mobs. For a full story see David Menashri, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 60–3; and Monica M. Ringer, *Education Religion and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran* (Costa Mesa, Cal.: Mazda, 2001), pp. 155–62. For the original Ottoman *Rüşdiyye* see Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839–1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), *passim*.

64. *Rāh-i mā: Guftārḥāʾī az purūfīsūr Sayyid Maḥmūd Ḥisābī* (Teheran: Sāzīmān-i chāp va intishārāt-i vizārat-i farhang va irshād-i islāmī, 1379/2000), pp. 5, 185–6. For a full

In the medical field, Beirut was the leading centre of learning and teaching in the Middle East.⁶⁵ One early graduate of AUB was Qasem Ghani, who went to Beirut to study at Saint-Joseph but had to change his plans after the onset of the First World War. The first volume of his memoirs is dedicated almost exclusively to his sojourn in that city during the war, and his reminiscences, which form the basis of H. E. Chehabi's Chapter 5, are valuable not only for what they tell us about the experiences of an Iranian at the SPC, but also because they afford us a glimpse of life in Beirut during the First World War and the SPC's heroic efforts to stand by its students in most difficult times.

Another Iranian AUB medical graduate who achieved prominence in later years was Zabih Qorban (born 1903 in Abadeh), who went to Beirut after graduating from Alborz College in 1924. He graduated from AUB in 1931, and after a year of training in Lyons returned to Iran in 1932. He became director of the small Namazi Hospital (*behbudestan*), but found that the hospital

had no nurses or aides of any kind, only some untrained staff. ... After a few months, my younger sister, Keyhan Qorban, returned from Beirut where she had completed four years of training as a nurse and midwife. ... A year later, in 1933, we gained a second nurse, Maimanat Dana, another member of our family, who also finished her training in Beirut and returned to Shiraz.

The two AUB graduates trained other nurses, much to the amazement of the local populace, not used to seeing unveiled women working, and the governor had to send extra police to protect them from mob assault.⁶⁶ In due course Zabih became founder and dean of Shiraz medical school, and then chancellor of Shiraz University. Both his sons studied at AUB, and one, Kambiz, became vice-chancellor of Shiraz University in 1976.⁶⁷

The same religious pluralism that made it possible for Muslim Iranians to study

list of his services to the nation, see *ibid.*, pp. 186–90. For a somewhat hagiographic biography written by his son see Īraj Ḥisābī, *Ustād-i ʿishq: Nigāhī bah zindagī va talāshhā-yi purūfīsūr Sayyid Maḥmūd Ḥisābī, pidar-i ʿilm-i fīzīk va muhandīsī-yi nuvīn-i Irān* (Teheran: Sāzīmān-i chāp va intishārāt-i vizārat-i farhang va irshād-i islāmī, 1380/2001).

65. See, for instance, Nigarendé, 'Beyrouth, centre médical', *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 7:1–2 (1909): 39–52.

66. Zabih Ghorban, *Medical Education in Shiraz: A Personal Memoir* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), pp. 3 and 5.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 61. However, most of the expansion of the medical school and the university was done with help from the British Council and the University of Pennsylvania.

at AUB also attracted non-Muslim Iranians to Beirut,⁶⁸ including adherents of the Baha'i faith, a religion that originated in nineteenth-century Iran.⁶⁹ Historians have largely neglected the social history of Baha'is (and one might add other religious minorities) as a constituent part of Middle Eastern societies, and it is to some extent in response to this neglect that we include a discussion of the encounter between Iranian Baha'is and Lebanon in this book.⁷⁰

IRAN, THE BAHĀ'Ī FAITH AND LEBANON

The first two leaders of the Baha'i faith lived much of their lives (1868–1908) in exile in Akka (Acre), in Ottoman Palestine. The history of the introduction of this religion to Lebanon illustrates the pivotal role of the shrine cities of Iraq as mediators between Iranian and Lebanese society, and is worth relating.

It was during the lifetime of the founder of the religion, Baha'ullah (1817–92),

68. Since neither Lebanon nor Iran have civil marriage, this at times created problems when members of different religious communities fell in love, to wit this entry in the annual report for 1934–35: 'The last event of the academic year showed how complicated the religious problems of Beirut can be. A young Zoroastrian from Persia received his medical diploma. Before going to work at Kermanshah, he desired to marry a Russian Orthodox girl, who came from Bulgaria to study nursing. Although the girl's parents cabled their consent, it was difficult to know how to conduct the wedding. Finally, all were satisfied when a recent graduate of Union Theological Seminary read a simple Protestant service in the presence of the Persian consul, who is a Shi'ite Muslim.' 'Report of the President of the American University of Beirut for the Sixty-Ninth Year, 1934–35', Typescript, Beirut, 22 July 1935, p. 3.
69. On the Baha'i faith and its forerunner, Babism, see Abbas Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); and Juan R. I. Cole, *Modernity and the Millennium: The Genesis of the Baha'i Faith in the Nineteenth-Century Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). For accounts of the religion(s) from a Baha'i perspective, see Alessandro Bausani, *Religion in Iran* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 2000), pp. 379–412; and Peter Smith, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions: From Messianic Shi'ism to a World Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
70. See Ismael Velasco, 'Academic Irrelevance or Disciplinary Blind Spot? Middle Eastern Studies and the Bahā'ī Faith Today', *Middle Eastern Studies Association Bulletin*, 35:2 (2001): 188–98, which, however, neglects to mention the exceptions that prove the rule, most importantly the seminal contributions of Juan Cole. For a discussion of the manifold difficulties that beset Baha'i studies, see Denis McEoin, 'The Crisis in Babi and Baha'i Studies: Part of a Wider Crisis in Academic Freedom?', *BRISMES Bulletin*, 17 (1990): 55–61. Although in an ideal world this would not be necessary, we wish to point out that we are neither former, nor present, nor, in all likelihood, future adherents of that religion.

that a man known to us as Shaykh Ja'far, who may have been of Persian origin,⁷¹ left the shrine cities to settle in the southern Lebanese village of Mashghara (in the southern Bekaa) as the local Shi'i imam. He was converted to the new faith in the city of Sidon by one Aqa Muhammad Mustafa Baghdadi, a prominent Baha'i of Beirut who had moved there from Baghdad. Upon his return to Mashghara, he announced his conversion to his flock because he did not want to deceive them, removed his turban, and replaced it with a fez. In subsequent years a number of his relatives by marriage also converted and formed the Baha'i community in Mashghara, which exists to this day in the middle of what is now a Hizballah-dominated town.⁷²

Baha'is from Iran regularly visited Baha'ullah and his son and successor, Abbas Effendi Abdul-Baha (1844–1921); and the proximity of Beirut to Akka made the SPC doubly attractive to Iranian Baha'is, for they could spend their holidays with their religious leader. It was only when Baha'is started proselytizing, that some at SPC were upset, as, in the words of one early Baha'i student, 'they had come to the Levant to convert, not to be invited to convert.'⁷³ But the proponents of a tolerant line, President Bliss among them, prevailed. At AUB, the Baha'i faith was accorded the same respect as other religions, to wit an AUB textbook for citizenship, published in 1940, which included a full discussion of the Baha'i faith alongside other religions,⁷⁴ a situation that stands in sharp contrast to Iran, where the religion has never been officially recognized, although its adherents generally fared well in the 1960s and 1970s.⁷⁵ In Chapter 4, Richard Hollinger analyses the

71. In Lebanon Shaykh Ja'far obtained a passport in which his surname was registered as Shushtari (his full name in his Iranian passport was Jaafar the son of Ali Asghar Tahhan Shushtari). His surname, while living in Iraq, was Tahhan, which his descendants still use today. The choice of the name Shushtari suggests a Persian origin, but some say that he was an Arab from Iraq and claimed to be Iranian only so as to be exempted from Ottoman military service. Whatever the truth may be, the confusion itself testifies to the fluidity of ethnic and national designations in that period.
72. We owe this story to Professor Vahid Behmardi of the American University of Beirut, who heard it from local elders.
73. 'Khāṭirāt-i Mīrzā Badī' Bushrū'ī', manuscript, p. 6. We are grateful to Professor Vahid Behmardi for making a copy of relevant passages of this manuscript available to us.
74. Stuart Carter Dodd, *Social Relations in the Near East: A Textbook in Citizenship Prepared for the Freshmen at the American University of Beirut* (Beirut: American Press, 1940), pp. 437–9.
75. For a balanced account see Denis MacEoin, *The Baha'i Community in Iran in the Twentieth Century*, occasional paper no. 4 (London: CNMES, SOAS, 1989). For the period of the Islamic Republic see Ridā Afshārī, 'Naqd-i huqūq-i bashar-i bahā'iyān dar jumhūrī-yi islāmī', *Īrān Nāmah*, 19 (1379–80/2001): 151–64.

Baha'i presence at AUB and discusses the impact of the university on the development of the Baha'i faith and of its Baha'i graduates on Iran.

A few years before the founding of the state of Israel, the third leader of the Baha'i faith, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani (1896–1957), asked the Baha'is of northern Palestine to leave, and most left for Jordan and Lebanon. These Baha'is, together with those in Mashghara, form a small community that has found its place in the religious mosaic of Lebanon; prominent members included Zeine N. Zeine, a respected historian of Arab nationalism and an important public intellectual and AUB professor, and H. M. Balyuzi, author and one of the founders of the BBC Persian service. The community remained small, however, for in the 1950s and 1960s Baha'is were not allowed to visit Beirut (resident Baha'is were exempt) because after 1948 a number of descendants of Abdul-Baha who had been excommunicated had settled in that city.⁷⁶ One of these, incidentally, a great-granddaughter of Abdul-Baha by the name of Leila Shahid, became PLO representative in Paris in 1994.

The advent of the Islamic Republic in Iran adversely affected Lebanon's Baha'is and, in 1985, one prominent member of the community in Beirut, Shehab Zahrai, was kidnapped and never seen again. Although no one has claimed responsibility for this abduction, it may have something to do with some members of the Zahrai family being active in maintaining Baha'i communication with the outside world from Iran.⁷⁷ Through all these years Baha'is have maintained a National Spiritual Assembly in Lebanon, a right they have not enjoyed in Iran since 1979. It bears mentioning that Lebanon was, together with Egypt, the springboard of the Baha'i faith's spread to North America, for it was a formerly Melkite convert to the new religion and graduate of SPC who first brought it to the United States.⁷⁸

Baha'is were not the only non-Shi'i group with transnational linkages spanning Iran and Lebanon. The Armenian schools and seminaries attracted a number of Armenians from Iran,⁷⁹ and many Armenian priests in Iran are either from Lebanon and Syria or are Iranian graduates of these seminaries. In A. W. Samii's chapter we read about the Armenian connection, but it deserves closer scrutiny by scholars of

76. In Baha'i parlance they had been found guilty of 'breaking the covenant'. Personal communication from Professor Vahid Behmardi, 5 June 2002.

77. Interview with Vahid Behmardi, 14 March 2001, Beirut.

78. See Richard Hollinger, 'Ibrahim George Kheiralla and the Bahá'í Faith in America', in Juan R. Cole and Moojan Momen, eds, *Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History, Vol. Two: From Iran East and West* (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1984), pp. 95–134.

79. See Vartan Gregorian, *The Road to Home: My Life and Times* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), Chapter 4 'To Beirut, Le Petit Paris', pp. 63–94. It would seem that Gregorian's social life revolved almost exclusively around interaction with other Armenians.

the Armenian diaspora. There is even a Polish connection, for during the Second World War, a number of Polish refugee children were taken from Teheran to Beirut.⁸⁰

LEBANON AND PAHLAVI IRAN

By a convenient coincidence Lebanon's constitution as a separate territorial jurisdiction (1920) was very closely followed by the rise to power of the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, who staged a *coup d'état* in 1921 and crowned himself Shah in 1926. By the same token, Lebanon's first republic coincided largely with the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, while the onset of the civil war preceded the demise of the Pahlavi regime by only three years.

In the 1920s Beirut was the major commercial centre of the Middle East, and the place from which American and European goods found their way to the rest of the Middle East, including Iran. One man who later became one of Iran's top industrial magnates, Habib Sabet, started his career as an international entrepreneur by going to Beirut (via Baghdad and Damascus) in 1925, buying a car there, and starting a passenger service between Teheran and Baghdad. He remembered his reaction to Beirut:

[Beirut] was a big and active port, which opened a gate between the Arab countries and Europe and was the centre for the sale of a variety of imported cars. ...

My first voyage to Beirut ... that beautiful and historical city that lies on the slope of Mount Lebanon and on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, was very pleasant and generated an unprecedented joy and excitement in me. I had heard a little bit about the history of this port city, which had been a major commercial and cultural centre during the heyday of the Phoenician, Roman, Islamic, and finally Ottoman civilizations, and about how in the present century its civic and cultural development had reached the highest levels both in its Islamic and Arab, and its Western and Christian aspects. But hearing things never equals seeing them.

When I saw this display of Lebanese civilization, everything I had known and heard was confirmed. I enjoyed looking at the city's bazaars and shops, which were full of European goods, of chairs, furniture, elegant fabrics, graceful clothes, and dishes made of crystal and china. For hours I wandered around the streets and shops, and lost myself looking at the

80. See I. Beaupré-Stankiewicz, D. Waszczuk-Kamieniecka and J. Lewicka-Howells, eds, *Isfahan: City of Polish Children* (n.p.: Association of Former Pupils of Polish Schools, 1989).

goods. Of course I bought a few souvenirs, including a pair of black patent-leather shoes for my sister, which everybody fell in love with in Iran, for until then nobody had seen shining black leather shoes in our country. All my relatives and acquaintances asked me to bring them these types of new shoes when I went on my next trip.

After a few days ... I looked for a car. Almost all European and American car manufacturers had representatives in this illustrious city, and as one of my acquaintances put it, Beirut was the Paris of the Middle East.

Sabet admits that he did not know much about cars, but he finally settled on a Ford, whose representative was a man named Charles Corm: 'Corm was a dignified, well-mannered man, a poet and a scholar who has left behind a number of books and poems. He was very well dressed and always wore pastel-coloured silk shirts and elegant suits.'⁸¹

Sabet adds that Charles Corm imported detached pieces of American cars and then had them assembled in Beirut. 'The cars, all of them black, were priced at between 80 and 85 Ottoman pounds.' Sabet bought a car, drove it on his pilgrimage to Haifa (he was a Baha'i), and then returned to Iran via Baghdad, where he picked up passengers. In Teheran he sold the car for twice the price he had paid, and with that profit returned to Beirut where he bought more cars. He started a lucrative passenger service for Iranian pilgrims to the shrine cities in Iraq, then became a major importer and later industrialist, and by 1978 was one of Iran's richest men. He died in exile in Los Angeles in 1990, all his companies having been confiscated after the revolution.⁸²

Diplomatic relations between independent Lebanon and Iran were established in the 1950s, there having been an Iranian consulate in Beirut since before Lebanese independence. There was a certain affinity between the Shah, who opposed radical Arab nationalism, especially Egypt's,⁸³ and the Maronite establishment, which was more oriented towards Europe. In the aftermath of the overthrow in 1952 of his former brother-in-law, King Faruk of Egypt, and his own seizure of power in 1953, the Shah attempted to counter revolutionary Arab nationalism by establishing closer contacts with pro-Western Arab states. In February 1955 Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan and Great Britain signed the Baghdad Pact, and later that

81. Charles Corm (1894–1963) was a leading 'Phoenicianist' and founded the *Revue Phénicienne* in 1920.

82. Ḥabīb Thābit [Sabet], *Sargudhasht-i Ḥabīb-i Thābit* (Costa Mesa, Cal.: Mazda, 1993), pp. 91–7.

83. On Iran's relations with Egypt, see Shahram Chubin and Sepehr Zabih, *The Foreign Policy of Iran: A Developing State in a Zone of Great-Power Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 140–69.

year the Shah invited King Saud of Saudi Arabia to Iran, and returned the visit in March 1957. In December 1957 the Shah paid a state visit to Lebanon. A few months later, during the Lebanese crisis of 1958, Iran endorsed the decision of President Camille Chamoun to ask US marines to intervene to help restore law and order.⁸⁴

Camille Chamoun maintained close relations with the Pahlavi state throughout his life. On two occasions Iran broke diplomatic relations with Lebanon over minor incidents, in 1966 and 1969. In 1969 it was the presence in Lebanon of Teimur Bakhtiar, a former head of SAVAK (the Shah's secret police) turned dissident that prompted the rupture. But in 1971, the Shah decided to restore diplomatic relations with Lebanon in anticipation of the British departure from the Persian Gulf, and so Camille Chamoun went to Iran, held a meeting with the Shah, and declared at the following press conference that the sovereign had 'graciously ordered that relations between Iran and Lebanon should be resumed'.⁸⁵ In his chapter A. W. Samii discusses some aspects of the relationship, but there was more to the relationship with Lebanon than *raison d'état*.

The rule of the Pahlavi dynasty is often seen as having been 'secular', a not unreasonable view given what followed it. One must remember, however, that under the Pahlavis, too, there was no separation of church and state, that the official religion of the state continued to be Twelver Shi'ism and that, according to Article 1 of the Supplementary Fundamental Laws of 1907, the Shah had not only to 'profess' the religion but also to 'promote' it, which he would promise to do, as per Article 39, in his oath of office.⁸⁶ While the two Pahlavi rulers did not take this too seriously domestically, in their foreign relations it presented a certain interest for Shi'is outside Iran – if for no other reason than that Iran represented a beacon of hope for many non-Iranian Shi'is, given that most of them were either of low socio-economic status or even suffered more or less overt discrimination.⁸⁷ In Lebanon privileged contacts with some Shi'i notables afforded the Shah's regime a certain inside track into the political system. But it must also be noted that, as recently published SAVAK documents show, Shi'i notables constantly tried to play different countries, including Iran and Ba'athist Iraq, against each other, and never tired of ill-mouthing rivals by accusing them of being 'anti-Iranian' and posing as

84. For details see Chapter 7, pp. 163–7.

85. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy 1941–1973*, p. 420.

86. Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*, new edition (Washington, D.C.: Mage, 1995), pp. 372 and 378.

87. Thus, after the overthrow of Afghanistan's King Amanullah in 1929, while Persian-speaking but Sunni rebels briefly ruled the capital Kabul, Reza Shah gave orders for the Iranian mission in Kabul to do what it could to aid the Shi'is of that city. See Robert D. McChesney, *Kabul under Siege: Fayz Muhammad's Account of the 1929 Uprising* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1999), p. 21.

'friends of Iran' themselves.⁸⁸ Moreover, most politically articulate Lebanese Shi'is were members or sympathizers of leftist or Arab nationalist parties with little affinity for the pro-Western regime of Iran.

Another telling sign that internationally Pahlavi Iran's official religion mattered was the fact that countries with sizeable Shi'i populations often sent Shi'i diplomats as ambassadors to Iran. From 1971 to 1978 the Lebanese ambassador to Iran was Khalil al-Khalil, a member of a prominent Shi'i family from Tyre, whose father had been secretary-general of Camille Chamoun's Liberal Party. As the case of the Khalil family shows, privileged ties to some Shi'i notables were not incompatible with close relations to the Maronite establishment. Moreover, many Christians discreetly encouraged Shi'i self-assertion in order to weaken the Sunni element with its more pan-Arab outlook. Thus the Shah's cordial relations with men like Chamoun may even have facilitated the establishment of the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council in 1969.

These confessional ties help explain why in the beginning the Shah's regime was quite willing to subsidize the activities of Musa Sadr, the Iranian-born cleric who moved to Lebanon in the late 1950s and galvanized Shi'is like no one before. The life and work of Musa Sadr in Lebanon and his impact in turning Shi'is into a major political force have been the object of extensive analysis, for which reason we dispense with discussing that in this volume.⁸⁹ However, his activities prior to his move to Lebanon and his subsequent involvement with Iran have never been examined closely. They shed considerable light not only on why he moved to Lebanon, but also on the subsequent Lebanon policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and are discussed in Chapter 6, co-authored by H. E. Chehabi and Majid Tafreshi.

Despite occasional contretemps in the realm of diplomacy, commercial ties continued throughout the Pahlavi era. The presence of Iranian merchants in Lebanon was already noted, but there was also a Lebanese colony in Iran; by 1978 they numbered about 150 businessmen.⁹⁰ Of these, the most prominent is Louis

88. *Yārān-i Imām bah rivāyat-i asnād-i Sāvāk: Ayat Allāh Imām Mūsā Ṣadr*, two vols (Markaz-i barrasī-yi asnād-i tārikhī-yi vizārat-i iṭṭilā'at, 1379/2000).

89. See Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); Peter Theroux, *The Strange Disappearance of Imam Moussa Sadr* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987); Muṣṭafā Juhā, *Sajīn al-ṣaḥrā': Al-fār'āmīlī Mūsā al-Ṣadr* (Beirut: n.p., 1988); Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community* (Boulder: Westview, 1992); Augustus Richard Norton, 'Musa al-Sadr', in Ali Rahnema, ed., *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (London: Zed Books, 1994); and H. E. Chehabi, 'The Imam as Dandy: The Case of Musa Sadr', *The Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review*, 3:1–2 (1996): 20–42.

90. Interview with Victor El-Kek, 12 March 2001, Beirut. Professor El-Kek is an Iranist

Gemayel, an industrialist whose philanthropy has had a major impact on Iranian society.

Louis Gemayel's father, Michel Gemayel (1893–1974) was a cousin of Pierre Gemayel, founder of the Kataeb political party. After the end of the First World War, Michel Gemayel worked for the French high commissioner in Beirut. Upon the demobilization of the *Armée du Levant*, the high commissioner wanted to sell that force's fleet of lorries (*camions leviers*), but there were no buyers in Beirut, as no one knew how to drive them. So the French offered Michel Gemayel approximately 300 vehicles on the understanding that he would pay for them after he had managed to sell them. As his son tells the story, first Gemayel went to Damascus, but there donkeys were used for transportation. Then he went to Baghdad, where camels were used. Encouraged by some of his former Iranian classmates at Antoura, he went to Teheran in 1921, saw Reza Khan, and sold him the fleet. While in Teheran, he received a monopoly for the import of alcoholic beverages. He returned to Beirut, and since there were no drivers, he hired the demobilized French soldiers to drive the lorries to Iran, laden with bottles of Cognac and other alcoholic beverages. In Iran, Gemayel became an agent for the French manufacturers Berliet, Bergrougant and Michelin, and continued importing alcoholic beverages. This activity went on until June 1939 when there was no longer anything to import, at which point he started looking for new things to do.

Back in Lebanon, Gemayel had cousins who had a cardboard factory. So in 1942 he set up a cardboard factory in Teheran in Mehdi-Abad, the village south of Teheran where he had settled with his family upon arrival. In 1945 he wanted to sell it, but his son, Louis Gemayel, who was born in Iran and is an Iranian citizen, took over. In 1954 Louis Gemayel set up Iran's first paper factory at Mehdi-Abad. Since Iran is a desert country with few trees, the raw materials for the factory were provided by a recycling scheme he invented.⁹¹

Michel Gemayel liked good works and had been instrumental in setting up an SOS children's village in Lebanon.⁹² At Kahrizak, a village near Mehdi-Abad, he had met Dr Mohammad Reza Hakimzadeh, who had started a small home for the

and director of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the Lebanese University.

91. Gemayel paid some of the capital's dustmen to separate the paper and cardboard they found in household rubbish and deliver it to the factory, a system that still works today: having started with 300 kilogrammes per day, the factory now receives about 1500 tonnes per day, delivered by 6000 of the capital's sanitation workers who thus make a little money on the side.
92. Founded by an Austrian, these institutions care for orphans. For their history see Hansheinz Reinprecht, *Abenteuer Nächstenliebe: Die Geschichte Hermann Gmeiners und der SOS-Kinderdörfer* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1984). On their activities in Lebanon and Iran see pp. 313–18 and 281–3, respectively.

handicapped. Next to his small facility there was a large empty house belonging to Mrs Fakhr al-Dowleh, the daughter of Mozaffareddin Shah and mother of Ali Amini, a former prime minister. Amini was persuaded to donate this house and so the home for the handicapped moved into a large house, which was gradually refurbished. The Gemayel family took a personal interest in the management of this growing complex, which came to include Iran's first old age home.

Mrs Gemayel instituted a ladies' workday by spending one day each week at Kahrizak caring for the elderly residents (bathing them, for instance). High society ladies followed her example and now regularly work one day a week at Kahrizak.

The Kahrizak scheme owes much of its success to its first director, a Lebanese woman named Mme Goldfinger, who had been the governess of Michel Gemayel's children. She insisted on immaculate cleanliness and transparent accounts, and since donors knew exactly where their money went, they opened their purse strings and thus began a virtuous circle that ultimately begot the Kahrizak Foundation, Iran's largest privately financed philanthropic organization that cares for the aged, handicapped and orphans.⁹³

In all these activities, the Gemayels remained studiously apolitical. In the course of the revolution some land of theirs was confiscated, but otherwise they kept their companies and the philanthropic institutions. It may have helped that before the revolution Louis Gemayel had built a Hosein ibn Ali mosque near the complex.⁹⁴ With the experience gathered in Iran, the Gemayel family established an old age home in Lebanon in 1987.⁹⁵

To sum up Iranian–Lebanese relations before the Iranian revolution, *realpolitik* was the basis of the Shah's policy towards Lebanon. But in a very rudimentary way Iran did function as an external country of reference for some segments within Lebanon's Shi'i community, although it never came even close to matching France's ties with the Maronites, Russia's (and later even the atheistic Soviet Union's) ties with the Orthodox, and to a lesser extent Great Britain's ties with the Druze.⁹⁶ What militated against a closer relationship between Iran and Lebanon's Shi'is was not only the Shah's own indifference to official religion,⁹⁷ but also the

93. For details see Ashraf Qandahārī, *Āshnāyān-i rah-i 'ishq* (Teheran: Gurūh-i bānuvān-i nīkūkār, 1381/2002) and <http://www.kahrizak.org>.

94. The above account is based on an interview with Louis Gemayel, 6 July 2003, Teheran.

95. <http://www.longuevie.com>

96. Edward Azar, 'Lebanon: The Role of External Forces in Confessional Pluralism', in Peter J. Chelkowski and Robert J. Pranger, eds, *Ideology and Power in the Middle East: Studies in Honor of George Lenczowski* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988), pp. 325–36. Oddly enough this piece does not even mention Iran!

97. The following exchange between the Shah and his confidant, Amir Asadollah Alam,

vast majority of Lebanese Shi'is' unambiguous espousal of Arab nationalism. It is even said that in the civil war that began in 1975, the Iranian government discreetly aided the Christian militias.⁹⁸

Parallel with generally friendly state-to-state relations, many of the Shah's Iranian opponents also found their way to Lebanon. The pluralism of Lebanese society and the possibility of publishing things that were censored elsewhere had always drawn intellectuals from all over the Arab world and Iran,⁹⁹ but the Iranian oppositionists who flocked to Lebanon in the 1970s were not attracted by Beirut's cosmopolitan ambience, unlike the previous generation of Iranians discussed earlier: on the contrary, they were sharply critical of Lebanon and identified with those who defied the status quo in the name of 'authenticity' and 'Islam'. To some extent this is due to their different socio-cultural background, which tended to be more traditional.¹⁰⁰

First, the impressions of Mohsen Nejathoseini (born 1944), a founding member of the leftist/Islamist People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, who went to Lebanon in 1970:

The border between Syria and Lebanon, which is the border between aridity

illustrates his ambivalence about his role. Disappointed by Musa Sadr's collaboration with opponents of his regime, the Shah told Alam that Shi'is are *pofiuz* (a colloquialism meaning cowardly, useless and stupid). In Iraq and Lebanon they were not getting anywhere, he said, and in Iran they had all become communists. By contrast, he continued, no Sunnis, no Zoroastrians, not even Baha'is had become communists in Iran. Alam pointed out that one had to keep numbers in mind, adding that in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon both Ottomans and the British had always supported the Sunnis so as to maintain these countries' conflicts with Iran. The Shah then complained that although he had at first supported Sadr, he had turned out to be a hypocrite (*doru*). At this Alam told him that be that as it might, 70 million people outside Iran considered the Shah their shah, which was no little matter. The Shah agreed. 'Alīnaqī 'Ālīkhānī, ed., *Yaddāshthā-yi 'Alam*, vol. 4 1353/1974 (Bethesda, Md.: IBEX Publishers, n.d.), pp. 184–5.

98. Andreas Rieck, *Die Schiiten und der Kampf um den Libanon: Politische Chronik 1958–1988* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1989), p. 329 n3.

99. One telling example is a famous Persian book titled *Bīst va sih sāl* (23 years), a critical analysis of the life of the Prophet Muhammad. According to the book's English translator, it was first published in Beirut. See 'Ali Dashti, *Twenty Three Years: A Study of the Prophetic Career of Mohammad*, translated by F. R. C. Bagley (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), p. xiii of the translator's Introduction.

100. On the decline of cosmopolitanism, see Sami Zubaida, 'Cosmopolitanism in the Middle East', in Roel Meijer, ed., *Cosmopolitanism, Identity and Authenticity in the Middle East* (London: Curzon, 1999), pp. 15–33.

and prosperity, had been set in the 1940s by French colonialists. At a time when the colonialists had become exasperated by the anti-colonialist struggles in Greater Syria, they separated the prosperous and blessed part, in which most Christians lived, from Syria under the name of 'Lebanon', and left the historic Muslim cities of Damascus and Aleppo to their own devices at the edge of the dry steppe.¹⁰¹

And he continues: 'Beirut, which was called the bride or the Paris of the Middle East, was the meeting place between the cultures of the East and of the West. The glitter and the glamour of life were dazzling, but cultural and social backwardness showed itself in people's behaviour.'¹⁰²

Second, there was Mostafa Chamran (1933–81), an American-trained engineer who went to Lebanon to work with Musa Sadr in 1971 and stayed until the Iranian revolution. In his opinion,

the basis of the Lebanese's activity is materialism and convenience. They are selfish, shortsighted, arrogant, smart and materialistic. For this reason Lebanese politicians are among the dirtiest animals on earth. ... Lebanese political parties are borne out of these politicians' thoughts and activities. Calumnies, lies, theft, working for foreign powers and accepting money from them are all considered astute and part of being in politics. A politician is considered the more successful the more money he gets from foreign powers. The same holds true for Lebanese newspapers and journals. They shamelessly take money from foreign countries and defend their interests.¹⁰³

Elsewhere he called Lebanon 'the most Westoxicated point in the Middle East' and averred that it had the most corrupt of all governments, the greatest oppression, and the greatest crimes. About Musa Sadr he wrote that 'under the domination of Israel, France, and America and under the most difficult of conditions this man was able to create a movement. After 1400 years these ill-fated, cowardly, and resentful Shi'is stirred ... and Lebanon's establishment trembled.'¹⁰⁴

Finally, there was Ali-Akbar Mohtashami, a disciple of Khomeini and later high official of the Islamic Republic, who was a frequent visitor in the 1970s:

101. Muḥsin Nijāthūsaynī, *Bar farāz-i khalīj* (Teheran: Nashr-i Nay, 1379/2000–2001), p. 172.

102. Ibid., p. 173.

103. Lubnān: *Guzīdah-ī az majmū'a-yi sukhānrānīhā va dastnīvishthā-yi sardār-i pur iftikhār-i Islām, Shahīd Duktur Muṣṭafā Chamrān darbārah-yi Lubnān* (Teheran: Bunyād-i Shahīd Chamrān, 1362/1983), p. 101.

104. Ibid., pp. 86–7.

At that time Lebanon was the political centre of the Middle East, and one of the politically and economically developed Arab countries. The people of Lebanon led the Arab world in intellectual and political development. Europe and America paid much attention to Lebanon, and [it] had excellent universities such as AUB, one of the best universities in the world. Politically, the parties and press of Lebanon were in no way inferior to those of the Western world, and were in many cases even more developed.

After praising the climate and the natural beauties of the country and pointing out the excellence of its agricultural products, he continued:

Culturally, Lebanon is extremely subordinated to the West. Since the country was for a long time a French colony and has many different religions, it lacks demographic homogeneity and therefore suffers from social disintegration. For one who enters Beirut for the first time, what attracts one's attention is socio-cultural corruption, which makes one think for a moment that one is in a European country. The cities have been built according to European patterns and houses have no [enclosed private spaces]. One can see numerous centres of prostitution, cabarets, wine shops, dance halls, theatres and cinemas showing degenerate programmes and films, and sexy publications. It is a society totally alienated from Islamic and even Eastern culture and customs, and it wallows in the corrupt culture of the West. The nudity of the bodies and souls of women and men, of girls and boys, torments the eyes of the beholder.¹⁰⁵

A few months later, his family briefly joined him and he rented a flat in an elegant apartment complex next to a little stream in east Beirut. But when his wife and sister, clad in Iraqi-style black veils, went to the stream to do some washing, the Christian neighbours complained and the family had to leave the premises within 24 hours and sought refuge in the Bekaa Valley.¹⁰⁶ In 1982, as Iranian ambassador to Syria, Mohtashami played a key part in the founding of Hizballah, as we shall see in Chapter 9.

Another cleric who visited Beirut was Seyyed Hadi Ghaffari, who would acquire notoriety in the 1980s for his leadership of violent vigilantes in Iran, the so-called *hezbollahis*. In the summer of 1978 he found that Lebanese and Syrian Shi'is were disappointingly indifferent to Islam's sumptuary laws, as he understood them: 'In those days even Shi'is did not wear the *hijab*, [and women] who came to

105. Sayyid 'Alī-Akbar Muḥtashamī, *Khāfirāt-i siyāsī*, vol. 2 (Teheran: Khānah-yi andishah-yi javān, 1378/2000), pp. 135–6.

106. Ibid., pp. 144–5.

Zaynabiyya as pilgrims were not covered. ... Even [women] who worked with Musa Sadr only put a kerchief on their head and wore skirts and tights.¹⁰⁷

What Nejathoseini, Chamran, Mohtashami and Ghaffari had in common was a Manichaean view of Lebanon according to which pro-Western and pro-Israeli Christians oppressed downtrodden Shi'is and dispossessed Palestinians. The activities of these and other of the Shah's opponents in Lebanon are discussed in detail in Chehabi's Chapter 8. Chamran and Mohtashami went on to become influential figures in the Islamic Republic, to whose relations with Lebanon we must now turn.

THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC AND THE EXPORT OF REVOLUTION

Like the French, Russian, Chinese and Cuban revolutionaries before them, the Iranian revolutionaries did not confine their ambition to their own country. This is made explicit in the preamble of the constitution of the Islamic Republic, which states:

The Constitution provides the necessary basis for ensuring the continuation of the revolution at home and abroad. In particular, in the development of international relations, the Constitution will strive with other Islamic and popular movements to prepare the way for the formation of a single world *Umma* (in accordance with the Koranic verse: 'This your community is a single community, and I am your lord, so worship me' [21:92]).

In this outward-looking vision, the armed forces are given a special role, for in the preamble we also read that the

Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps ... will be responsible not only for guarding and preserving the frontiers of the country, but also for fulfilling the ideological mission of jihad in God's way, that is, *extending the sovereignty of God's word throughout the world* (this is in accordance with the Koranic verse 'Prepare against them whatever force you are capable to muster, and strings of horses, striking fear into the enemy of God and your enemy, and others besides them' [8:60]).¹⁰⁸

107. Hādī Ghaffārī, *Khātirāt-i Hujjat al-Islām va al-Muslimīn Hādī Ghaffārī* (Teheran: Hawza-yi hunarī-yi sāzmān-i tablīghāt-i islāmī, 1374/1995–96), p. 298.

108. Emphasis added. It is worth noting that the constitution does *not* bind the government to the international agreements signed and ratified by Iran, as many other constitutions

The chapter on foreign policy is less belligerent. Article 152 commits the government to non-alignment and 'the defence of the rights of all Muslims', and article 154 simultaneously pledges scrupulous non-interference in other nations' internal affairs and support for the just struggles of the oppressed (*mostaz'afin*) against the oppressors (*mostakbarin*).

Post-revolutionary Iranian support for the 'oppressed' can be schematized in terms of three concentric circles: an outer circle consisting of Third World countries and liberation movements in general, a middle circle comprising Muslims, and an inner circle consisting of Twelver Shi'is. The anti-imperialist thrust is easily explained by the revolutionaries' perception of the Shah's regime as a vassal of the United States, and it led them to support not only groups such as the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the Pan-African Congress in South Africa,¹⁰⁹ but also the Irish Republican Army.¹¹⁰ The most prominent and consequential exponent of this kind of anti-imperialist internationalism was Mohammad Montazeri, who set up a liberation movement unit within the Revolutionary Guards in 1979.¹¹¹ However, as the revolutionary regime became more explicitly Islamist, non-Muslim liberation movements, regimes set up by victorious liberation movements (such as Zimbabwe), and generally anti-American states found that they had less and less in common with Iranian officials, which meant that cooperation took place only where it served the national interests of both sides – as with North Korea, which profited handsomely from its arms sales to Iran at a time when Iran was at war with Iraq and had to get arms where it could.

This brings us to the next circle, the Islamic *umma*. As the excerpts from the constitution quoted above show, the new Islamic Republic consciously appealed to Muslims in general rather than Twelver Shi'is in particular. And in the beginning, many Sunnis around the world were indeed captivated by the message of Iran's revolution. In the course of the 1980s, however, non-Shi'i sympathy for Iran's

(including the American) do. Many of these international treaties, such as the Charter of the United Nations, are incompatible with spreading one's own religious conceptions throughout the world by force.

109. For an elaboration of this theme see Nikki R. Keddie, 'Islamic revival and third worldism', in Jean-Pierre Digard, ed., *Le Cuisinier et le philosophe: Hommage à Maxime Rodinson* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1982), pp. 275–81.

110. To this day the street behind the British embassy in Teheran is named after Bobby Sands, the IRA activist who died as a result of a hunger strike in 1981.

111. In his speeches after the revolution he often included members of other religions in his conceptualization of *mostaz'afin* – even, on one occasion, Baha'is. See *Farzand-i Islām va Qur'ān*, vol. 2 (Teheran: Vāhid-i farhangī-yi Bunyād-i Shahīd, 1362/1983), p. 694. For more on him see Chapter 8, p. 193 and Chapter 9, pp. 205–7.

Islamic regime waned.¹¹² The reasons are many: Khomeini's refusal to end the war with Iraq in 1982, when Saddam Hussein offered peace, made him guilty in many Muslim eyes of perpetuating Islamic fratricide. Moreover, by its fundamentalist policies the Iranian regime alienated moderate Muslims, while its appeal to fundamentalist Sunnis was limited because the more fundamentalist a Sunni is, the more hostile to Shi'ism he will be – a fact copiously exploited by the Saudis, who financed a religious *cordon sanitaire* around Iran.¹¹³ That left Twelver Shi'is as the natural audience for Khomeini's revolutionary message.¹¹⁴

Outside Iran Shi'is are a minority,¹¹⁵ and in those countries where they constitute a demographic majority (Iraq and Bahrain), they have been traditionally ruled by Sunni-dominated regimes.¹¹⁶ Aggrieved Shi'is everywhere greeted the Iranian revolution with sympathy, for it seemed to presage greater support from the one and only Shi'i state in the world. In Lebanon, Shi'is had suffered tremendously as a consequence of the civil war that began in 1975 on the one hand and the Israeli invasion of 1978 on the other, and thus greeted the affirmation of Shi'i power in Iran with joy.¹¹⁷ Even before the triumph of the revolution, committees for the support of the Islamic Revolution were formed in mosques and *husayniyyas*. But it bears emphasizing that even at this point a majority of politically active Shi'is still militated in leftist, Arab nationalist and Palestinian organizations, which supported the Iranian revolution with non-sectarian formulations.

Iraqi Shi'is were in the middle of a confrontation with the Ba'athist regime when

112. Wilfried Buchta, 'The Failed Pan-Islamic Program of the Islamic Republic: Views of the Liberal Reformers of the Religious Semi-Opposition', in Nikki Keddie and Rudi Matthee, eds, *Iran and the Surrounding World 1501–2001: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).
113. Vali Nasr, 'The Rise of Sunni Militancy in Pakistan: The Changing Role of Islamism and the Ulama in Society and Politics', *Modern Asian Studies*, 34:1 (January 2000): especially 157–8; and Vali Nasr, 'Regional Implications of Shi'i Revival in Iraq', *Washington Quarterly*, 27:3 (Summer 2004): 7–24.
114. For an elaboration see Olivier Roy, 'Le Facteur Chiite dans la Politique Extérieure de l'Iran', *Central Asian Survey* 9: 3 (1990): 57–75.
115. For the distribution of Shi'is beyond Iran see François Thual, *Géopolitique du chiisme* (Paris: Arléa, 1995). For the areas east of Iran see Vali Nasr, 'The Iranian Revolution and Changes in Islamism in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan', in Keddie and Matthee, eds, *Iran and the Surrounding World*, pp. 327–54.
116. On Arab Shi'is see Graham E. Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke, *The Arab Shi'a: The Forgotten Muslims* (New York: Palgrave, 2001). Shi'ism is also the dominant form of Islam in Azerbaijan, but there the problematic of religious affiliation is different from the Middle East due to the legacy of communism. Besides, the country was not independent yet in 1979.
117. For details, see Chapter 9, pp. 202–3.

the Shah was overthrown,¹¹⁸ and from very early on Khomeini sent incendiary messages to Iraq urging Shi'is to fight on, thereby provoking, in the last analysis, the Iraqi attack on Iran in September 1980.¹¹⁹ Also, as early as 1979, some Iranian clerics got involved in attempts to overthrow the government of Bahrain.¹²⁰ Elsewhere in the Middle East official Iranian policy in the early years of the revolution under Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan and then President Abolhasan Banisadr consisted merely in giving moral encouragement to anti-status quo groups. After Banisadr's ouster in the summer of 1981, however, radical Islamists controlled all levers of power in Iran, and proceeded to spread the revolution abroad more actively. One way to do so was by disseminating the official Iranian version of Twelver Shi'ism in the Arab world, and Lebanon having always been a centre of Arab publishing, a number of publishing houses were established (or used) for this purpose by the Islamic Republic.¹²¹

Since the anti-Shah demonstrations of 1978 Islamist activists who feared that secular groups might come to power had started referring to themselves as *hezbollah*, 'party of God', a term used in the Koran.¹²² In 1979 and 1980 the irregular groups that actively fought 'liberals' (supporters of Bazargan and Banisadr) on the streets called themselves *hezbollahi*, and when hardliners gained full power in the summer of 1981, they called their government *dowlat-e hezbollahi*.¹²³ The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982 triggered the

118. See Amazia Baram, 'The Impact of Khomeini's Revolution on the Radical Shi'i Movement of Iran', in David Menashri, ed., *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World* (Boulder: Westview, 1990), especially pp. 141–7.
119. None other than Ayatollah Hosein Ali Montazeri writes in his reminiscences: 'We gave harsh slogans against them and talked about exporting the revolution and provoked them against us and these slogans became the basis for provoking Iraq and causing the eight year war.' *Matn-i kāmīl-i khāṭirāt-i Āyat Allāh Husayn-ʿAlī Muntazirī* (Spanga: Baran; Vincennes: Khavaran; Essen: Nima [=Ittihad-i nāshirīn-i irānī dar Urūpā], 2001), p. 243.
120. For details see Fuller and Rahim Francke, *The Arab Shi'a*, pp. 125–7.
121. Stephan Rosiny, *Shia's Publishing in Lebanon. With Special Reference to Islamic and Islamist Publications* (Berlin: Verlag Das Arabische Buch, 1999), p. 27.
122. 5:56: 'And those who take God and His Prophet and the faithful as their friends are indeed men of God [Hizballah], who will surely be victorious.' The term is also used in 58:22. For an explication see As'ad AbuKhalil, 'Ideology and Practice of Hizballah in Lebanon: Islamization of Leninist Organizational Principles', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27:3 (July 1991): 392–3.
123. Duktur Sa'īd Barzīn, *Jināḥbandī-yi siyāsī dar Īrān* (Teheran: Nashr-i Markaz, 1377/1998), p. 49. Ironically, the first group in modern Iranian history to call itself *hezbollah* (the Persian pronunciation) were the Baha'is, who used it to signify their non-partisanship in worldly politics, the term having been used by Baha'ullah in the

Iranian attempt to help radical Lebanese Shi'is to remake their country in the image of revolutionary Iran, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

However, reading the pronouncements of Khomeini on Lebanon, one cannot help but note that for him the struggle against Israel had priority over remaking Lebanon, which essentially turned that country into a staging ground for the battle against Zionism.¹²⁴ For the men around him, as the examples cited above show, Lebanon was an 'Islamic' land that had suffered Western cultural contamination, making it a battleground for Islamic confrontation with Western cultural influence. Moreover, after 1982 and the exit of the Palestinians that the Reagan administration had brokered, the superiority of Islamism over secular nationalism could be demonstrated by attacking the Israeli presence more efficiently, which was one reason behind the Islamic Republic's material and moral support for the Lebanese Hizballah,¹²⁵ a party that started as a coalition of groups in the Bekaa Valley and that by 1985 congealed into a centralized organization.

With the history and evolution of Lebanon's Hizballah having been analysed in

Tablet of Unity (*Lawḥ-i Ittihad*). In 1948 a party by the name of Hezbollah was founded in Shiraz but proved to be a mere footnote to history. For its programme see *Asnādī az anjumanhā va majāmi'ī madhhabī dar dawra-yi Pahlavī* (Teheran: Sāzīmān-i chāp va intishārāt-i vizārat-t farhang va irshād-i islāmī, 1381/2002), pp. 225–6.

124. Khomeini's veritable obsession with Israel cannot be explained only by the plight of the Palestinians, as he showed much less concern for the sufferings of, say, the Afghans at the hands of the Soviets, whose maltreatment of Afghans was far worse than Israel's treatment of Palestinians. One cannot but conclude that anti-Jewish bias was another driving force in addition to sympathy for the suffering of the Palestinians. Khomeini's anti-Judaism catches the eye on the very first page of his most popular book, *Islamic Government*: 'From the beginning, the historical movement of Islam has had to contend with the Jews, for it was they who first established anti-Islamic propaganda and engaged in various stratagems, and, as you can see, their activity continues down to the present. Later they were joined by other groups, who were in certain respects more satanic than they.' Hamid Algar, ed., *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981), p. 27. According to the monthly publication that reflected the views of Ali-Akbar Mohtashami, 'the Imam told Palestinians to kill all the Jews in Israel and throw them out to the last person.' *Bayān*, 12 (Murdād-Shahrivar 1370/July–September 1991): 62–3.

125. Chris P. Ioannides, 'The PLO and the Islamic Revolution in Iran', in Augustus Richard Norton and Martin D. Green, eds, *The International Relations of the Palestine Liberation Organization* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), pp. 91–3.

several fine studies,¹²⁶ the two chapters devoted to Hizballah's politics in this book focus on Iran's role. In Chapter 9 Chehabi tells the story of how Iran became involved in Lebanon after the revolution and contextualizes this involvement within Iran's factional politics and its war against Iraq. In 1989 the death of Khomeini in June and the assumption of the presidency by Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani a few weeks later resulted in a critical re-evaluation of Iran's foreign policy, which was henceforth concerned with Iran's national interest in addition to bringing the benefits of the revolution to the entire *umma*. In September, the Ta'if Agreement, by making provision for a re-equilibration of Lebanon's intercommunal power sharing, portended the end of the Lebanese civil war, which came about after Iraq attacked Kuwait in August 1990 and Syria was free to crush General Michel Aoun's movement. In Chapter 12 Chehabi examines the changes brought about by the new domestic contexts in both Lebanon and Iran, and also the new international context.

Like previous attempts to export a revolution, the Iranian attempt was ultimately unsuccessful. It was only in Lebanon that headway was made, but that had more to do with the weakness of the Lebanese state, which allowed the Iranians to operate on Lebanese territory without interference from the legal authorities.¹²⁷ Once the Lebanese government's authority over the territory was re-established, Hizballah had no choice but to adapt to the new realities and abandon the quest for an Islamic Republic. What remained was a strong association between a Lebanese political party, Hizballah, and a foreign country, Iran, which is not unlike that of other alliances between Lebanese parties and foreign governments. Where this one differs is that, thanks to Iranian largess, Hizballah has set up a network of social, educational and welfare institutions, which has provided it with a structural base of support among the Shi'is (and a few non-Shi'is). As a newspaper not known for its sympathy for the Islamic Republic put it in 1991: 'Amid [the] ruins [of Beirut's southern suburbs] almost everything that makes life bearable is supplied by Hizballah. There is clean water in tanks emblazoned with the Iranian flag and spotless hospitals where doctors work on Iranian-subsidized salaries.'¹²⁸ In Chapter 11 Judith Harik analyses the various ways in which Hizballah remedied the absence of social services in areas under its control during the civil war and after, helped by subsidies from Iran. Since the early 1990s, however, Iranian subsidies have decreased substantially, and Hizballah has become more self-sufficient. At the same time, the election of Mohammad Khatami to the Iranian presidency in

126. See references in Chapter 9, footnote 2.

127. This point is forcefully made in F. Gregory Gause, III, 'Revolutionary Fevers and Regional Contagion: Domestic Structures and the "Export" of Revolution in the Middle East', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 14:3 (Spring 1991).

128. *Wall Street Journal*, November 1991, p. A16.

1997 changed official Iranian attitudes to Lebanon. The new president's wife is a niece of Musa Sadr and some of his key advisors had lived for extensive periods of time in Lebanon. Khatami is quite familiar with Lebanon and has expressed his admiration for Lebanese society as a whole in no uncertain terms. These changes are discussed in Chapter 12.

THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION

The establishment of a theocracy in Iran no doubt provided a major fillip for Shi'i self-assertion in Lebanon, although one must not forget that this self-assertion had indigenous roots and antedated the Iranian revolution by many decades.¹²⁹ While the connections between Hizballah's largely clerical leadership and Iran's ruling ulema are close, they are not coterminous with the Shi'i clerical network spanning the two countries. The link between Hizballah and the Iranian government is not akin to that between the Soviet Union and the communist parties of yore, the main reason being that, while individual Shi'i parties may imitate Leninist organizational structures,¹³⁰ the Shi'i ulema on the whole are not organized on the basis of democratic centralism; in fact, according to an old saying, 'the order of the ulema is in its disorder'.

As mentioned earlier, the relationship between Shi'i ulema from Lebanon and from Iran was mediated for centuries by the shrine cities of Iraq, principally Najaf, where most of them studied.¹³¹ The establishment of Qom as a major centre of learning in the 1930s did not change that. Even when Twelver Shi'is widely

129. Tarif Khalidi, 'Shaykh Ahmad 'Arif al-Zayn and Al-'Irfan', in Marwan R. Buheiry, ed., *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890–1939* (Beirut: Centre for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies, 1981), pp. 110–24; Salim Nasr, 'La Transition des Chiites vers Beyrouth: Mutations sociales et mobilisation communautaire à la veille de 1975', in *Mouvements communautaires et espaces urbains au Machreq* (Beirut: CERMOC, 1984); Helena Cobban, 'The Growth of Shi'i Power in Lebanon and its Implications for the Future', in Juan J. R. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie, eds, *Shi'ism and Social Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 137–55; Chibli Mallat, *Shi'i Thought from the South of Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1988); Andreas Rieck, *Die Schiiten und der Kampf um den Libanon: Politische Chronik 1958–1988* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1989); and Sabrina Mervin's magisterial *Un réformisme chiite: Ulémas et lettrés du Ġabal 'Āmil (actuel Liban-Sud) de la fin de l'Empire ottoman à l'indépendance du Liban* (Paris: Karthala, 2000).

130. This point is made for Hizballah in Abu Khalil, 'Ideology and Practice of Hizballah in Lebanon'.

131. The autobiography of Muhsin al-Amin (1867–1952) contains many vignettes about his encounters with Iranians in Iraq in the 1890s. See Muhsin al-Amīn, *Autobiographie d'un clerc chiite*, pp. 106–15, *passim*.

recognized Ayatollah Mohammad Hosein Borujerdi as the supreme spiritual authority (*marja' al-taqlid* in Arabic, *marja'-e taqlid* in Persian, plural *maraji'*) between 1944 and his death in Iran in 1961, his actual influence on the day-to-day conduct of religious affairs in Lebanon was very limited, for most Lebanese Shi'is, like many Iraqis, followed Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim in Najaf.¹³² After his death in 1970 they gravitated to Ayatollah Abulqasim Khu'i, who also resided in Najaf. In Iran, a number of other *maraji'* competed for the believers' allegiance after Borujerdi's death in 1961, including, after 1964, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Khomeini differed from his peers in that his assumption of the religious leadership had come about not by the traditional religious criteria whereby Shi'i ulema distinguished themselves until believers accepted them as a *marja'*, but had been precipitated by political events, namely his opposition to the Shah's consolidation of his personal dictatorship in 1963 and 1964. In matters of domestic politics, Khomeini spoke almost exclusively to the concerns of Iranians, and although he was exiled to Najaf in 1965 and lived there until October 1978, he never seems to have had much of a following among Iraqi and Lebanese Shi'is. In the early 1970s Khomeini, drawing the logical consequence from his opposition to the Pahlavi monarchy, developed his theory of clerical rule (*wilayat al-faqih* in Arabic, *velayat-e faqih* in Persian, it is most accurately translated as 'guardianship of the jurispudent').¹³³ In February 1979 a blueprint for the constitution of an Islamic Republic of Iran, incorporating the notion of *wilayat al-faqih* and written by Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, was published in Beirut. Although a Persian translation soon circulated in Iran,¹³⁴ it is unclear how influential this text was in the elaboration of the final text of the constitution of the Islamic Republic, which was adopted in August 1979.¹³⁵ After the adoption of the constitution following a carefully orchestrated plebiscite, the right of the ulema to rule was state dogma in Iran, and any Iranian ulema who disagreed with it dared not challenge it publicly in

132. In a more or less official biography of Borujerdi published in Iran the only reference to Lebanon is a short notice to the effect that he financed the building of a 'presentable' [Shi'i] mosque in Tripoli. 'Alī Davānī, *Zindagānī-yi za'im-i buzurg-i 'ālam-i tashayyu' Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī*, revised edition (Teheran: Nashr-i Muṭahhar, 1372/1993), p. 237.

133. On this theory see Hamid Enayat, 'Iran: Khomeini's Concept of the Guardianship of the Jurisconsult', in James Piscatori, ed., *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2000), pp. 115–28.

134. Chibli Mallat, *The Middle East into the 21st Century* (Londo: Ithaca Press, 1996), p. 131.

135. See Said Saffari, 'The Legitimation of the Clergy's Right to Rule in the Iranian Constitution of 1979', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 20:1 (Spring 1993): 64–82.

Iran. It was thus in Beirut that the first widely distributed doctrinally reasoned refutation of Khomeini's concept was published.¹³⁶ Its author was Muhammad Jawad Mughniyya (1904–79), a Lebanese scholar with close personal ties to Ayatollah Kazem Shari'atmadari in Qom, having taught at the latter's Dar al-Tabligh Institute in the 1970s.¹³⁷ While praising Khomeini for his revolutionary action, Mughniyya contested his contention that the Imams' authority passed to the clergy in their absence, on the grounds that, unlike the Imams, ulema are normal human beings and therefore not infallible. It follows that if they made mistakes as rulers, this would harm religion – a fear, one might add, that has proven justified in Iran where religious practice has fallen since the 1990s.¹³⁸

The reception of Khomeini's notion of *wilayat al-faqih* in Lebanon since 1978 deserves more detailed study than we can give here. Suffice it to say that after 1982 the groups that came together in the Bekaa under Iranian patronage adopted it, and that after 1985 it became Hizballah's official party line. Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah (born 1935), who emerged as Hizballah's spiritual guide in Lebanon, also endorsed it.¹³⁹ Except that Lebanon's demography is very different from Iran's: Shi'is constitute only a plurality of the population, and of these only a minority support Hizballah. Moreover, no Sunni, Druze or Christian can be expected to have any affinity for a Shi'i theocracy.¹⁴⁰ And so both Fadlallah and

136. Muḥammad Jawād Mughniyya, *Al-Khumaynī wa al-dawlat al-islāmiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm li'l-Malāyīn, 1979).

137. Ayatollah Kazem Shari'atmadari was the most widely followed *marja'* inside Iran before Khomeini's return and was defrocked in 1982 following an aborted coup attempt by Sadeq Qotbzadeh of which he had been informed. He died in 1986, having been denied medical treatment by the authorities.

138. For an excellent analysis of Mughniyya, see Karl-Heinrich Göbel, *Moderne Schiitische Politik und Staatslehre* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1984), pp. 65–139. See also Chibli Mallat, *Aspects of Shi'i Thought from the South of Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1988), pp. 16–25.

139. Although in his case the filiation may be not with Khomeini but with Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, to whom he had been very close, and who had developed similar ideas in the 1970s. According to Chibli Mallat, in fact, the Islamic Republic's *velayat-e faqih* is based on Muhammad-Baqir al-Sadr's ideas. See his *The Renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf, and the Shi'i International* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 59–78. See also Mallat, *Shi'i Thought from the South of Lebanon*, pp. 37–42.

140. In the city of Tripoli in northern Lebanon Sunni Islamist clerics ruled from October 1983 to October 1985. Although their leader, Shaykh Sa'īd Shā'ban, was sympathetic to Iran, he was brought to power by an alliance with the PLO and toppled by the Syrians. Michael Humphrey, *Islam, Sect and State: The Lebanese Case* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1989).

Hizballah came to distance themselves from it in the 1990s, as Lebanon's second republic took shape and Hizballah decided to participate in its working.¹⁴¹ Hizballah now declares that while theocratic rule remains its theoretical ideal, it realizes that the implementation of this ideal is not possible in the near future,¹⁴² a bifurcation between ideals and accommodation to reality that is not without precedent.¹⁴³ This distancing, it should be noted, parallels discussions in Iran, where, after Khomeini's death, many hitherto convinced ulema began modifying and rethinking the concept,¹⁴⁴ while those who opposed it came out with clear refutations, such as Mehdi Haeri Yazdi (1923–99), the son of the founder of the Qom seminaries (and teacher of Khomeini), Shaykh Abdolkarim Haeri, who argued that when a people are deemed so ignorant that they need a guardian, they cannot be assumed to have competence to choose that guardian, making the theory of the guardianship of the jurisprudent logically inconsistent.¹⁴⁵

While the fusion of religious and political power by Iran's ruling clergy formed the background to Hizballah's allegiance to Iran, it allowed other Shi'i actors to take their distance from the Iranian regime, as they could claim to accept Iran's

141. In fact, Fadlallah had expressed ambivalence about *wilayat al-faqih* almost from the beginning. See Olivier Carré, *L'Utopie islamique dans l'Orient arabe* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1991), especially pp. 203–8 and 236–7; and Talib Aziz, 'Fadlallah and the Remaking of the *marja'iya*', in Linda S. Walbridge, ed., *The Most Learned of the Shi'a: The Institution of the marja' Taqlid* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), especially pp. 212–13.

142. Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizballah: Politics and Religion* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), pp. 59–68.

143. In the early nineteenth century, Molla Ahmad Naraqi formulated the political theory on which Khomeini's construct is based, but maintained cordial relations with Iran's ruler at the time, Fath-Ali Shah. On Naraqi see Hamid Dabashi, 'Early Propagation of *Wilayat-i Faqih* and Mulla Ahmad Naraqi', in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hamid Dabashi and Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, eds, *Expectation of the Millennium: Shi'ism in History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 288–300.

144. On the evolution of thinking about *velayat-e faqih* in Iran, see Shahrough Akhavi, 'Contending Discourses in Shi'i Law on the Doctrine of *Wilāyat al-Faqih*', *Iranian Studies*, 29:3–4 (1996): 229–68; Homa Katouzian, 'Islamic Government and Politics: The Practice and Theory of the Absolute Guardianship of the Jurisconsult', in Charles Davies, ed., *After the War: Iran, Iraq, and the Arab Gulf* (Chichester: Carden Publications, 1990), pp. 255–86; and Ahmad Kazemi Moussavi, 'A New Interpretation of the Theory of *Vilayat-i Faqih*', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 28 (January 1992).

145. Mahdī Hā'irī Yazdī, *Hikmat va hukumat* ([France]: Shādī, 1995). On Haeri Yazdi see Farzin Vahdat, 'Mehdi Haeri Yazdi and the Discourse of Modernity', in Ramin Jahanbegloo, ed., *Iran: Between Tradition and Modernity* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), especially pp. 62–5.

lead in one realm but not the other. Thus Nabih Berri compared Amal's relation to Khomeini with that of Catholics and the pope,¹⁴⁶ implying that while Khomeini was respected as a spiritual authority, Amal owed the Islamic Republic no political allegiance. Sayyid Fadlallah did the opposite: he accepted the political leadership of the Islamic Republic, but remained close to the apolitical Ayatollah Khu'i, whose *wakil* (representative) he was in Lebanon until Khu'i's death in 1992. This made his alliance with Iran a matter of political expediency rather than the necessary consequence of a spiritual allegiance, meaning that it could be revoked at any given moment. It also allowed him to remain relevant to those Lebanese Shi'is who had no particular political sympathy for Iran at all, and compete for the allegiance of Lebanese Shi'is in general with Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddin, Musa Sadr's successor as head of the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council, whose focus was on Lebanon from the beginning. Typical of Shamseddin's position is this statement: 'The Shi'is in Lebanon are primarily Lebanese, in second place Muslims, and only in [last place] Shi'is. Their Lebaneseness is a matter of principle, and any change in Iran or in any other place will not change this reality.'¹⁴⁷

With Hizballah's ascendancy in the 1980s, a number of Lebanese Shi'is chose Khomeini as their *marja'*, a choice again motivated by the political conjuncture. Between Khomeini's death in 1989 and Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Golpayegani's death in 1993 all *maraji'* of that generation disappeared, posing a serious succession problem. In 1994 the Iranian government tried to elevate Ayatollah Ali Khameneh'i, who had succeeded Khomeini as supreme leader, to the rank of a *marja'*, but the attempt met with considerable resistance and soon afterwards both Fadlallah and Shamseddin assumed the position of *marja'*.¹⁴⁸

For most of the twentieth century relations between the Shi'is of Lebanon and those of Iran were mediated by the 'Atabat in Iraq. The establishment of an Islamic Republic in Iran, the civil war in Lebanon, and the totalitarian regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq combined to forge direct links between the two communities. Iranian Shi'ism has thus had a certain unmediated influence on Lebanese Shi'ism in recent years, an influence that can be seen, for instance, in the popularization of such titles as *hujjat al-Islam* and *ayatullah*, which were largely unknown in Lebanon before the 1980s. In Chapter 10 Rula Abisaab analyses one aspect of this influence, namely the dynamic and multifaceted adaptation of the ideals of the Iranian Islamic revolution in Lebanon. It highlights the radical transformation in

146. *Le Monde*, 16 February 1984, p. 3, as quoted in Riad Fakhri, 'L'Iran d'une guerre à l'autre: L'implication de la République islamique d'Iran dans le conflit libanais entre 1979 et 1989' (Mémoire du Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies, EHESS, 2002), p. 87.

147. Quoted in Stephan Rosiny, *Islamismus bei den Schiiten im Libanon* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1996), p. 113.

148. For details, see Chapter 12, pp. 298–301.

the scholastic production of the *'alim* (religious scholar) and his role in a revolutionary society. Within the religious seminaries, which made their first official appearance on the Lebanese scene in the 1980s, young Shi'i men affiliated with Hizballah rebelled against the conventional, apolitical and exclusively juridical training in Najaf and Qom. It remains to be seen how the revival of the centres of learning in Iraq following the ouster of the Ba'thist regime will affect the religious life of Lebanon's Shi'is.

IRANIAN SOFT POWER

As we saw earlier, in the first half of the twentieth century Beirut, with its cosmopolitan blend of East and West, was a source of inspiration for Iran's elite. In the 1980s the flow of inspiration went in the opposite direction, as Iran's new rulers ousted the old self-consciously cosmopolitan elite, turned against Western cultural influence, promoted a return to an (ideologically constructed) Islamic 'self', and found sympathizers for their quest for authenticity among those left behind by Lebanon's fabled quest to be the Switzerland of the Middle East: poor Shi'i men and women whose concerns had been addressed neither by the political system nor by the traditional *zu'ama* who 'represented' them within the system, and whose socio-cultural marginality was compounded by dislocations caused by a decade and a half of civil war and Israeli invasions. For these people the Iranian revolution was proof that the downtrodden could change things if they set their mind to it, and the Islamic Republic confirmed their hopes by providing generous material and organizational help when no one else did. For the Iranian regime, this help begot a certain measure of 'soft power' among some of the newly assertive Shi'is, who associated the Islamic culture promoted by their Iranian allies with success and thus came to emulate it.¹⁴⁹ This could be seen on the everyday level, where first in the Bekaa and after 1984 in west Beirut some women took to wearing a fully covering garment, *abaya*, which also became known as *shadur* (from Persian *chador*),¹⁵⁰ while others who did not wear at least a *hijab* were at times harassed. The sale of alcoholic beverages was prevented or made more difficult, and there were even reports that among some activists it became trendy to mispronounce Arabic words in the Persian manner.

Muharram rituals provide a fascinating example of the flow of cultural patterns. Before the Iranian revolution, they were more common in southern Lebanon than

149. The concept of 'soft power' is taken from Joseph S. Nye, Jr, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), especially pp. 193–5. Nye elaborated on the concept in *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

150. Cf. the Iranian *māntū*, whose derivation from the French *manteau* is only etymological.

in Beirut or the Bekaa, but as Hizballah constituted itself in the latter and then gained control of parts of the former, the tenth of the Muharram (*Ashura*) was commemorated there as well. In October 1984, bars were attacked in west Beirut during *Ashura* and demands were heard for an Islamic Republic. The processions of September 1985 organized by Hizballah looked Iranian, as flagellants shouted slogans in Arabic and Persian. And in 1986 Husayn al-Musawi and Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayli, two leaders of Hizballah, preceded the *Ashura* procession barefooted, while some carried Iranian flags.¹⁵¹

Most high ranking clerics having always been opposed to the more violent rituals in which flagellants cut their foreheads with knives and daggers (*latm* in Arabic, *qamehzani* in Persian),¹⁵² in June 1994 Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khameneh'i, finally outlawed them on the eve of the mourning month. In a speech on the philosophy and function of the rites he said:

How can this be called mourning? These practices do not belong to religion. No doubt God is not happy about them. The hands of the ulema of the past were tied and they could not speak up. But today Islam rules, and we must not allow our Islamic society to be presented to other Muslims and non-Muslims as superstitious and illogical in the name of Imam Husayn.¹⁵³

In Lebanon, Hizballah, which by now officially acknowledged Khameneh'i as *marja'*, implemented the ban on drawing blood in the processions it organized, but the practice was continued in processions sponsored by Amal and the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council. On the surface, 'pro-Iranian Hizballah' followed the Iranian line, whereas 'moderate Shi'is working within the confines of the Lebanese system' and non-political Shi'is continued the traditional Lebanese practices. Except of course that Khameneh'i outlawed customs that Muhsin al-Amin had condemned more than seventy years earlier, whereas Amal has clung to the ritual patterns Iranian immigrants introduced in the late nineteenth century.¹⁵⁴

With the reconstitution of the Lebanese state in the 1990s and Iran's new emphasis on pursuing its national interest, the appeal of things Iranian has waned. It was one thing to wave an Iranian flag when the state represented by the cedar flag was inoperative, but it meant something different after Ta'if when, with one exception, militias were dissolved and the Lebanese state extended its reach to the previously autonomous confessional 'cantons'. In the 1990s Hizballah consciously and purposefully 'Lebanonized' itself, with the blessing of an Iranian state that put more and more emphasis on *realpolitik* and, consequently, state-to-state relations.

As Iranians and Lebanese have become more familiar with each other as a result of increased travelling, a few notes of disenchantment on both sides have crept into the relationship. About 300 Lebanese seminarians now study in Qom, and a school has been established for their children. At Iranian universities, 50 scholarships a year are available for Amal and 100 for Hizballah, although many do not find takers. The Lebanese who have spent some time in Iran at times complain about Iranian haughtiness and anti-Arab *ressentiment*.¹⁵⁵ The Iranians who reside in Lebanon are mostly people whom Saddam Hussein expelled from Iraq in the 1970s and, being bilingual, have integrated well.¹⁵⁶ But Iranian clerics visiting Lebanon have been heard to complain that after millions of dollars spent in that country, one can still see plenty of unveiled women in neighbourhoods dominated by Hizballah. And yet, as late as 1997, the victory of the Iranian team against that of the United States at the football world cup in France was greeted with outpourings of joy on the streets of al-Dahiya (the southern suburbs of Beirut) – although the joy may have been caused more by the American team's defeat.¹⁵⁷

In the sixteenth century scholars from the Jabal 'Amil moved to Iran and helped establish orthodox Twelver Shi'ism as the official state religion, and in the twentieth century first an Iranian with 'Amili roots, Musa Sadr, helped bring the culture of the Jabal 'Amil to the Bekaa Valley, and then the revolutionary fervour in Iran transformed parts of Lebanon's Shi'i community. In a sense, history has come full circle.

CONCLUSION

While the unique nature of the Hizballah experiment in Iranian–Lebanese relations

Islamist Shi'i Muslims in Beirut' (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2003), Chapter 5.

155. Musāhaba bā Rawshanak Shā'irī Āyzinlū'ir [Eisenlohr], 'Ravābiṭ-i Īrān va Lubnān', *Guftugū*, 37 (Murdād 1382/July–August 2003): 153–4.

156. Ibid.: 160–1.

157. For the political ramifications of this game, see H. E. Chehabi, 'US–Iranian Sports Diplomacy', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 12:1 (March 2001): 89–106.

151. Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, 'Les interprétations d'un rite: célébrations de la 'Achoura au Liban', *Maghreb-Machrek*, 115 (January–March 1987): 23–5.

152. This extreme form of self-flagellation is originally neither Persian nor Arabic, and was in fact introduced into Iran by Caucasian Turks in the nineteenth century. See Ivar Lassy, *The Muharram Mysteries among the Azerbaijan Turks of Caucasia* (Helsingfors: Lilius & Hertzberg, 1916). Self-injury as part of mourning is not uncommon in different cultures. See Ernst Samter, *Geburt, Hochzeit und Tod* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1911), pp. 109–20.

153. *Risālat*, 22 Khurdād 1373/12 June 1994, p. 4.

154. For an analysis of the political dimensions of various ways of commemorating *Ashura* in Lebanon, see Lara Deeb, 'An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety among

has to be recognized, it must nonetheless be viewed against the background of previous contacts between Iran, as a society and a state, and the lands that constitute Lebanon today. The discrepancy in size, both geographic and demographic, as well as in political continuity, between Iran and Lebanon can readily be noted. With an established state tradition stretching for centuries (and building upon an imperial tradition that predates the advent of Islam), Iran has provided a considerable portion of the political and cultural legacy of the Islamic civilization, and entered the nation-state system of the modern Middle East as a major regional power. In contrast, the creation of modern Lebanon in the context of this nation-state system has yielded a ‘precarious republic’, to use Michael Hudson’s apt term,¹⁵⁸ that had to endure decades of strife for the issue of its legitimacy to be settled. Prior to this creation, the history of Lebanon was part of the provincial history of the Ottoman hinterland. Scholarship on Lebanon, both local and international, has striven, with uneven success, to establish a uniqueness and continuity in Lebanese history, through a centralized narrative that favours the history of Mount Lebanon, around which the modern state of Lebanon was created, often at the cost of reducing and marginalizing the histories of the adjacent areas, which are today integral components of Lebanon, including Jabal ‘Amil, the core area of Shi‘i presence. Still, both before and after the emergence of the Lebanese nation-state, whether from Jabal ‘Amil or from Beirut, a Lebanese impact on Iranian culture and society can be documented. It ranges from the Safavid importation of ‘Amili Shi‘i clerics in the sixteenth century, in their effort to affect a conversion of Iran to the Shi‘i form of Islam, thus distinguishing it from its Sunni neighbours, through the use by the Iranian elite of the educational opportunities provided by Beirut early in the twentieth century, to the experimentation with leftist and Islamist formulations by Iranian dissidents in the 1960s and 1970s. In reverse, the Iranian impact on Lebanese culture, already indirectly present through the medium of Najaf – as the common international Shi‘i space – is felt diffusely in the work of Imam Musa Sadr prior to the Islamic revolution, before reaching its proactive stage with Hizballah as a foothold for Iranian influence in the closing decades of the twentieth century. A consideration of the issue of agency in these major stages and episodes of Iranian–Lebanese transnational ties has to recognize a predominant role for the Iranian partner. Whether it is a result of the discrepancy in size and historical continuity, and whether it is influenced by the Mediterranean (then Western) orientation of Lebanese interests since the nineteenth century, in terms of education, trade and political vassality (translating to a lesser focus on Iran, *inter alia*), Iranian–Lebanese transnational ties have amounted to an uneven relationship.

158. Michael C. Hudson, *The Precarious Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon* (New York: Random House, 1968).

The purpose of this collection of articles is to provide an eclectic survey of the transnational ties between Iran and Lebanon, covering the major episodes and components of these ties, with a particular focus on aspects that have received less attention in scholarship.¹⁵⁹

159. We would like to draw attention to the forthcoming dissertation by Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlohr, ‘Transnationalism, Identity Production, and Shi‘ism in Lebanon’ (University of Chicago), which analyses the various Shi‘i networks connecting Lebanon and Iran in greater detail.

Part I

Iran and
Pre-Independence
Lebanon

From Jabal ʿAmil to Persia

Albert Hourani

Shiʿi scholars from Jabal ʿAmil, the hill-country that lies inland from Sayda and Sur (Tyre) in southern Lebanon, claim that theirs is the oldest of all Shiʿi communities. They attribute its foundation to Abu Dharr, a Companion of the Prophet and one of the first supporters of the claims of Ali to be his successor. He is said to have gone from Medina to Damascus, and to have been exiled from there to the country districts of *Bilad al-Sham*, or Syria in the broader geographical sense. There is a mosque associated with his name in the village of Mays al-Jabal.¹

Little is known in fact about the spread of Shiʿism in this district at an early date. What is certain is that it was widespread in Bilad al-Sham as a whole by the tenth century. When a Shiʿi dynasty, the Hamdanids, ruled in Aleppo, and later when most of the country was incorporated into the Fatimid Empire, a majority of the Muslim part of the Syrian population may have been Shiʿi. A number of travellers of the time bear witness to this. Naser-e Khosrow, passing through Sur in 1047, notes that most of the population is Shiʿi, although the *qadi* is Sunni.² Ibn Jubayr records in 1184 that there are more Shiʿis than Sunnis in the country of Damascus, and they are divided into a number of groups, Imamis, Rafidis, Zaydis, Ismaʿilis and Nusayris.³ Half a century later, Yaqut ibn Abdallah in his

1. J. Robson, 'Abu Dharr al-Ghifari', *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd edn), I, pp. 114–15; al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan (al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī) *Amal al-āmīl fī tarājīm ʿulamāʾ Jabal ʿĀmil* (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Andalus, 1385/1965–66), vol. 1, p. 13; Muḥsin al-Amīn [al-ʿĀmilī], *Khiṭaṭ Jabal ʿĀmil* (Beirut: Maṭbaʿat al-Inṣāf, 1983), p. 83.
2. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Sefer nameh: Relation du voyage de Nassiri Khosrau en Syrie, en Palestine, en Egypte, en Arabie et en Perse, pendant les années de l'hégire 437–444 (1035–1042)*, edited, translated and annotated by Charles Schefer (Paris: E. Leroux, 1881), p. 47.
3. Muhammad ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, edited by M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1907), p. 380.

geographical dictionary quotes from Ibn Butlan, who visited Aleppo in the middle of the eleventh century and reported that the legal scholars there gave their fatwas in accordance with the Imami *madhhab*.⁴ Shi'i biographical dictionaries also give the names of a number of scholars from Aleppo in this period.⁵

The conquest of Syria by Salahaddin, and the rule first of the Ayyubids and then of the Mamluks, turned the tide. The military expeditions of the Mamluks in the Kisrawan district of northern Lebanon, more or less unsuccessful in 1292 and 1300 but totally successful in 1305, were directed not so much against the 'Twelver' Imamīs as against the more extreme and uncompromising groups, the Isma'īlis and Nusayris, who, living as they did near to the Mediterranean coast, could be regarded as posing a political as well as a religious danger. Ibn Taymiyya directed fatwas against them, and he himself took part in the third expedition. The Imamīs also came under pressure of various kinds, however; the line between Sunnis and Shi'is was not as firmly drawn as it was later to be, and no doubt many crossed it in order to conform with the beliefs of the rulers. By the fourteenth century Shi'is were probably no longer in a majority among the Muslim inhabitants of Syria. They had ceased to be important in northern Syria, but continued to be present in Damascus, where there was an important centre of local Shi'i devotion, the shrine of Sayyida Zaynab. For the most part they were confined to the regions where they have continued to live until today: Nusayris in the region of Ladhīqiyya, Isma'īlis in two small groups, Druze in the southern half of Lebanon and Imamīs in Jabal 'Amil and the Bekaa Valley.

In spite of attrition and occasional persecution, the high tradition of Shi'i learning continued to exist in the small market towns and villages of these districts. We know little about the schools and scholars of Jabal 'Amil before the twelfth century, but from that time onwards the outlines become clearer. In some of the towns and villages there were families of scholars who handed down the tradition from father to son, and attracted seekers after learning from elsewhere. There do not appear to have been large schools with permanent endowments.⁶

Some of the most important of these families lived in small towns lying on trade routes from Damascus. Mashghara and Jezzine (then a Shi'i town, although

4. Yaqut ibn 'Abd Allah al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan: Jacut's Geographisches Wörterbuch*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Leipzig: in Commission bei F. A. Brockhaus, 1867), vol. 2, p. 307.

5. For instance, the entry for Taqī al-Dīn ibn Najm al-Ḥalabī in al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Amal al-āmil*, vol. 2, p. 46; for 'Izz al-Dīn Ḥamza ibn 'Alī-Ḥusaynī al-Ḥalabī, *ibid.*, pp. 105–

6. Cf. 'Umar ibn Aḥmad ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab min tārikh Ḥalab*, ed. Sāmī Dahhān, vol. 2 (Damascus: Al-ma'had al-faransī bi Dimashq li'l-dirāsāt al-ʿarabiyya, 1954), pp. 293–4.

6. Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Khiṭat*, pp. 182 ff.

later it was to become Maronite Christian) were on the main road from Damascus to Sayda, and Mashghara also lay near a route running southwards to Galilee. Karak Nuh, one of the most important centres of learning, was further north, in the Bekaa, on one of the two main roads between Damascus and Baalbek; during the Mamluk period it was the administrative centre of the district of Biqa' al-Azizi, and had a mosque built at what was believed to be the burial place of Noah, where teachers, students and readers of the Koran were supported by endowments from the Mamluk sultan. Other centres of learning, however, like Nabatiyya, Juba' and Mays al-Jabal lay on smaller routes and were little more than villages.⁷

The persistence of a tradition of high learning in poor rural districts, and without the support of the ruler or the great cities, needs to be explained. The depth of conviction that has always marked the partisans of Ali and his line partly accounts for it, as also does the existence of the shrine cities of Iraq, exercising an influence from afar. Two other reasons may be suggested, however. The first is the comparative remoteness of Jabal 'Amil from the centres of power, the small scale of its life and the poverty of its resources, all of which made it scarcely worth the while of the rulers of the great cities to occupy or control it directly, so long as its inhabitants offered no political threat. In the absence of direct control, the region was ruled by local lords, some of whom were Shi'is and could extend patronage and protection to those who shared their loyalties. At least one of the historic ruling families of Jabal 'Amil, that of Ali al-Saghir (ancestors of the present notable family of As'ad) appears to have been present by the fourteenth century.⁸

The remoteness of the district and the protection of its leading families may not only have preserved a Shi'i tradition that already existed there, but attracted Imamīs from other parts of Syria. The modern historian of Jabal 'Amil and its scholars, Muḥsin al-Amin al-ʿAmili, has suggested that learned Shi'is from Aleppo and Damascus may have found refuge there. As one piece of evidence for this, he points out that the first great *alim* of the district, Shamseddin Muhammad ibn Makki, did not receive his *ijazas* from local teachers, as did later scholars, but went to Iraq and elsewhere to study.⁹

A second reason for the persistence of Imami learning may perhaps be found in the lack of a sharp distinction between Sunni and Shi'i traditions of learning. Relations between them were delicately balanced between toleration and persecution.

7. René Dussaud, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1927); Maurice Gauthier-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l'époque des Mamelouks d'après les auteurs arabes* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1923), pp. 70, 74, 246; Janine Sourdell-Thomine, 'Inscriptions arabes de Karak Nuh', *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, 13 (1949–51): 71–84.

8. Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Khiṭat*, p. 134.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 77–8.

The possibility of persecution was always present, but at the same time Sunni and Shi'i scholars could learn from each other. The *Usuli* movement, which was given an impetus by Najmeddin Ja'far al-Hilli, known as al-Muhaqqiq al-Awwal (609/1205–6–676/1277) and then by Jamaledin Hasan ibn al-Mutahhar al-Hilli, known as the 'Allama (648/1250–726/1325), had an influence beyond the Shi'i community. It emphasized the need to interpret the Imams' traditions in accordance with logical principles, and to deduce from them a body of legal precepts. This involved collecting the traditions attributed to the Imams, assessing the reliability of those who had transmitted them, drawing conclusions from them, and formulating the rules by which such conclusions should be drawn. Shi'i scholars who followed this line of thought were encouraged not to withdraw into their own community, but to seek knowledge of hadith and understanding of the principles of judicial reasoning wherever they could find it, among 'amma and khāssa (commoners and notables), Sunnis and Shi'is alike. On the other hand, the 'Allama's methodology of law had a deep influence upon Ibn Taymiyya, although he wrote a polemical reply to the 'Allama's *Minhaj al-karama*.¹⁰

Examples of the links between Sunni and Shi'i scholars and of the threat of persecution, which was ever present, can be found in the lives and deaths of two scholars of Jabal 'Amil who are commonly known as the First and Second Martyrs (*al-Shahid al-Awwal* and *al-Thāni*). The First Martyr, Shamseddin Muhammad ibn Makki (734/1333–34–786/1384), a native of Jezzine, studied with Fakhraddin, the son of the 'Allama, and other teachers in Iraq, where he stayed for five years, and then went to study with Sunni teachers in Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Damascus, Jerusalem and Hebron; the number of those with whom he studied is said to have been 40. Following the *Usuli* line of thought, his main work was to define the methods and rules of jurisprudence, on the basis of what he had learnt from the Sunni as well as the Shi'i tradition of *usul al-fiqh*. He maintained that competent scholars should give legal judgments, and faithful Muslims should have recourse to them rather than to judges appointed by unjust rulers. This emphasis upon the role of the 'alim in the community was perhaps a reflection of the position of the Shi'is in the *Bilad al-Sham* of his time, alienated as they were from the holders of power. He visited Damascus frequently and taught there, but it is a sign of the limits to Shi'i activity that he could only teach the Shi'i books at night because of the extreme need for precautionary concealment (*shiddat al-taqiyya*). For all his caution, he was imprisoned by the governor of Damascus because of accusations brought by his enemies and authenticated by the Maliki *mufti*, and was finally executed.¹¹

10. Henri Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Taki-d-Din Ahmad b. Taimiyya* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1939), pp. 36–7 and 97.

11. Muḥsin al-Amīn, *A'yān al-shi'a*, vol. 47 (Beirut: Maṭba'at al-Inṣāf, 1380/1960), pp. 36–

The Second Martyr, Zayneddin ibn Nureddin Ali (911/1506–966/1558), came from a family of scholars in Juba'. His great-grandfather, both his grandfathers and his father were all scholars, and one of his forbears had studied with the 'Allama. In his own account of his early life, preserved by his biographers, he described his journeys in search of learning. He studied first with his father at Juba', then in Mays with a famous teacher, Ali ibn Abd al-Ali, then at Karak Nuh. After that he went further afield: first to Damascus, where he studied not only *fiqh* but medicine, astronomy and the philosophy of Suhrawardi, then to Cairo where he worked for varying periods with 16 Sunni scholars. His studies there included hadith, the four Sunni schools of *fiqh*, and other branches of knowledge.

He then went to Istanbul in order to obtain from the Ottoman government an appointment as a teacher in a Sunni *madrasa*; he was given a post in the Nuriyya *madrasa* at Baalbek, where he is said to have taught all five *madhhabs*, the four Sunni and the Imami. After five years there he returned to Juba', where he spent the rest of his life teaching, studying and writing. He is said to have been the first of the later Shi'i ulema to write systematically about the transmission of hadith, using methods and terms taken from Sunni scholars.

It is related by his biographers that his fame reached the ears of the Ottoman sultan, who sent an emissary to bring him to Istanbul so that he could discuss the Imami *madhhab* with the leading ulema. The emissary found that he was absent from home and making the pilgrimage; he followed him to Hijaz and took him back from there to Istanbul. There is more than one version of what happened after that. One is that the emissary killed Zayneddin before they reached Istanbul, thinking that this was what the sultan wanted, but the sultan was angry at this disobedience to his instructions and had the emissary killed. Another version is that he was brought to Istanbul, where some of the Sunni ulema told the Grand Vizir that he was claiming to exercise *ijtihad*, and what he was teaching was *kufr*; he was therefore executed by order of the Grand Vizir without being brought before the sultan.¹²

49; al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Amal al-āmil*, 1: 181–3; al-Mirzā 'Abd Allāh Afandī al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ wa hiyaḍ al-fuḍalāʾ*, vol. 5 (Qom: Maktabat Āyat Allāh Marʿashī al-ʿĀmma, 1401/1980–81), pp. 185–91; Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī, *Luʾluʾāt al-Baḥrayn* (Najaf: Maṭbaʿat al-Nuʿmān, 1386/1966), pp. 143–8. For the significance of his work, and that of his followers, cf. Norman Calder, 'Zakāt in Imāmī Shi'i jurisprudence, from the tenth to the sixteenth century AD', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 44 (1981): 468–80, and 'Khums in Imāmī Shi'i jurisprudence, from the tenth to the sixteenth century AD', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 45 (1982): 39–47. For some of his students, cf. Āghā Buzurg al-Tihrānī [Muḥammad Muḥsin], *al-Dhariʿa ilā taṣānīf al-shi'a*, vol. 1 (Najaf: Maṭbaʿat al-Gharrā, 1355/1936), pp. 236 ff.

12. Muḥsin al-Amīn, *A'yān al-shi'a*, vol. 33 (Damascus: 1368/1949), pp. 223–96; al-Ḥurr

Deprived of the support of the ruler and the wealth of the cities, this rural tradition of learning might have shrunk in time as did those of the Druze and Nusayris, had it not been for events in a far country. As the rule of the Safavids expanded from northwestern Persia into the heart of the country, and for a time into Iraq, the extreme Shi'i views current among the Turkoman tribesmen who formed their army became a potential source of danger to a dynasty that had to appeal to the population of the Persian cities, and in particular to those who possessed the high urban tradition of Islam. Shah Isma'il's proclamation of 'Twelver' Imamism as the official religion of his empire was perhaps designed to open a middle path between extremes, restrain the excesses of his own followers, and provide a principle of legitimacy for his rule and that of his family.

If Shi'ism was to be the religion of the empire, preached in the mosques, taught in the schools and administered in the courts, there was a need for teachers to propagate it and jurists to define and apply the law. Such teachers and jurists scarcely existed in Persia. There were pockets of Shi'ism in Khorasan, Iraq al-Ajam and elsewhere, but the notables of the great cities who were drawn into the Safavid service were for the most part not Shi'i by *madhhab*, although 'forms of interior piety of Shi'i type' were widespread.¹³ The process by which Shi'ism spread was a slow one, and in the first stages Shah Isma'il and then his successor Tahmasb brought ulema from the Arabic-speaking countries – from Iraq, Bahrain and Jabal 'Amil – to reinforce those from Persia.

The first important scholar to come from Jabal 'Amil, and in some ways the most influential of all, was Ali ibn Abd al-Ali al-Karaki (870/1465–66–940/1533). Born into a family of scholars, he studied at Karak Nuh with Zayneddin Ali ibn Hilal al-Jaza'iri and other scholars who stood in the line of intellectual descent from the First Martyr;¹⁴ he therefore inherited the central tradition of the *Usuli* movement. From Karak Nuh he went to Egypt, and then to the holy cities of Iraq, where his fame as a scholar became great enough for Shah Isma'il to invite

al-*Amili*, *Amal al-amil*, vol. 1, pp. 85–91; al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, vol. 2, pp. 365–86; Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Jubāʿī al-*Amili*, *al-Durr al-manthūr min al-maʿthūr wa ghayr al-maʿthūr*, vol. 2 (Qom: Maṭbaʿa Mihr, 1398/1977–78), pp. 149–99; al-Baḥrānī, *Luʾluʾāt al-Baḥrayn*, pp. 28–36.

13. Jean Aubin, 'La politique religieuse des Safavides', in *Le Shi'isme imamite: Colloque de Strasbourg* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970), pp. 235–44.

14. al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, vol. 4, pp. 280–3; al-Ḥurr al-*Amili*, *Amal al-amil*, vol. 1, p. 122; Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍat al-jinnāt fī aḥwāl al-ʿulamāʾ wa l-sādāt*, ed. Asad Allāh Ismāʿīliyān (Qom: Maktabat Ismāʿīliān, 1390–92/1970–72), vol. 4, pp. 356–9.

him to his Court; he paid a visit there, and went for a longer period in the reign of Tahmasb, who gave him official functions and endowments.¹⁵

It was perhaps not only the paucity of Shi'i scholars in Iran that made the employment of al-Karaki and others like him valuable to the new dynasty. A scholar from abroad, with no roots in Persian urban society, might be of greater use to a dynasty still unsure of its position than would be one who had links of interest with the dominant classes of the cities. What may have been even more important, al-Karaki had taken from his teachers a tradition that laid emphasis on the role of the *ʿalim* as guardian of the sharia and successor of the Imam, and gave scope to competent scholars to practice *ijtihād* and to draw appropriate conclusions from the sources by the exercise of valid methods of reasoning. Al-Karaki claimed that the *mujtahid* was the deputy (*naʿib*) of the hidden Imam as far as the giving of judicial decisions was concerned, and his writings show examples of decisions that were in harmony with the interests of the dynasty. Muslims, he argued, could collect the canonical land tax (*kharaj*) for the ruler, and accept their share of it from him, even in the absence of the Imam; they should perform the Friday prayer even if the Imam is not present to lead it. Such teachings went in the direction of accepting the rule of the Safavids and conferring a kind of legitimacy upon it, and in his turn Shah Tahmasb recognized al-Karaki as the Imam's deputy and the seal of the *mujtahids*, with responsibility for maintaining the sharia.¹⁶

The path al-Karaki opened was followed by others during the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century. As Said Amir Arjomand has shown, the immigrant scholars, whether from Jabal 'Amil or Bahrain, never obtained control of all the high positions in the religious establishment. The office of *sadr*, with its control of religious endowments, and the major judgeships were given mainly to Persians

15. Wilferd Madelung, 'Al-Karaki', *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd edn), vol. 4, p. 610; al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, vol. 3, pp. 441–60; al-Ḥurr al-*Amili*, *Amal al-amil*, vol. 1, pp. 121–2; Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Aʿyān al-shiʿa*, vol. 41, pp. 174–8.

16. Madelung, 'Al-Karaki', p. 610; Hossein Modarressi Tabataba'i, *Kharaj in Islamic Law* (London: Anchor Press, 1983), p. 165; Hossein Modarressi Tabataba'i, *An Introduction to Shi'i Law: A Bibliographical Study* (London: Ithaca, 1984), p. 50; Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), pp. 132 ff.; and Erika Glassen, 'Schah Isma'il I und die Theologen seiner Zeit', *Der Islam*, 48 (1972): 254–68. For the circumstances in which al-Karaki defended the legality of *kharaj*, and the opposition to his views, cf. Wilferd Madelung, 'Shiite discussions on the legality of the *kharaj*', in Rudolph Peters, ed., *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), pp. 193–202. For al-Karaki's writings and his influence on Shah Tahmasb, cf. A. K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam: An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 266–77. See also Chapter 3, pp. 77–82.

and, as in the Ottoman Empire, there was a tendency for them to be kept in the hands of certain families with a tradition of learning, urban leadership and official service. Immigrant scholars, however, were appointed to the office of *shaykh al-Islam* in major cities, and as preachers in mosques and teachers in schools. They were therefore in a position to play an important part in the spread of moderate and responsible Shi'i doctrine and practice among the Persian population.¹⁷

As with other immigrant groups in other places, a person who succeeded in obtaining a good position would attract and help other members of his family or of families linked with his. A large proportion of the scholars who went from Jabal 'Amil to Persia seem to have belonged to a small number of families linked to each other by ties of blood or intermarriage, or those of teacher and student. Thus, the descendants and relations of al-Karaki continued to play an important part in Persian life; his son Abd al-Ali was also given recognition by the Shah as the chief *mujtahid* of his age.¹⁸ The family of the Second Martyr too came to Persia, but much later. His son Hasan continued to live at Juba', and there wrote an important textbook of jurisprudence, *Ma'alim al-din*. Hasan's son Muhammad studied with his father, then with Sunni scholars in Damascus, and later went to Mecca and from there to Karbala. Muhammad's son Ali remained at Juba' when his father went to Mecca, studied there and at Karak Nuh, and then went to Persia and lived in Isfahan.¹⁹

Two other families from Juba' also became important in Persia. Husayn ibn Abd al-Samad al-Harithi al-Juba'i (918/1512–984/1576) was a student of the Second Martyr and went with him on his first journey to Istanbul. In the year of his teacher's death he went to Persia, and for a time was *shaykh al-Islam* in Qazvin when it was Shah Tahmasb's place of residence. He was sent from there to Khorasan after the Safavids conquered it, and became *shaykh al-Islam* at Herat; after a time he asked permission to make the pilgrimage (to Mecca) and did not return from it to Persia, but settled in Bahrain where he died.²⁰ His more famous son, Baha'eddin Muhammad, known as the Shaykh al-Baha'i (953/1547–1031/1621), was born in Baalbek when his father was teaching there, and taken by his father to Persia when very young. He there acquired a Persian as well as an Arabic education. He wrote in both languages, and on many subjects: poetry, mathematics, astronomy, a famous anthology, the *Kashkul*, and a work on *fiqh* in

17. Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, pp. 122 ff.; Jean Aubin, 'Etudes safavides, I. Šah Isma'il et les notables de l'Iraq persan', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2 (1959): 37–81.

18. Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, p. 137.

19. 'A. al-Juba'i al-'Amili, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, vol. 2, pp. 199–259.

20. Muhsin al-Amīn, *A'yan al-shi'a*, vol. 27, pp. 226–70; al-Hurr al-'Amili, *Amal al-amil*, vol. 2, pp. 74–7; al-Bahrānī, *Lu'lu'āt al-Baḥrayn*, pp. 23–8.

Persian. He held various posts, but like his father gave them up for a life of poverty and of travel for the sake of learning and devotion, and spent years abroad before returning to Persia.²¹

Another line from Juba' was that of Muhammad ibn Ali al-Musawi (946–1009/1539–1540–1600–1601), grandson of the Second Martyr through his mother. He lived at Juba' and there wrote *Madarik al-ahkam*, a commentary on the *Shara'i' al-Islam* of al-Muhaqqiq. His son Husayn studied with him, and then went to Persia and studied further with the Shaykh al-Baha'i. He lived in Khorasan, became *shaykh al-Islam* of Mashhad, and taught in the place of honour beneath the great eastern dome of the shrine of the Imam al-Rida (Reza).²²

Yet another line goes back to Nureddin Ali al-Maysi who had been the teacher of the Second Martyr. His descendant Lutfullah ibn Abd al-Karim (died 1032/1622) was born in Jabal 'Amil but taken early to Mashhad and studied there. He held posts at Mashhad and then went to Isfahan, where he taught in the famous mosque built for him by Shah Abbas I and named after him.²³

In general, these scholars belonged to the *Usuli* school, but with another scholar we come across another line of thought. Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Hurr al-'Amili (1033/1623–1624–1104/1692–1693) born in Mashghara, came from a family of scholars who claimed descent from a famous figure of early Islamic history: al-Hurr ibn Yazid al-Riyahi, who was sent by the governor of Iraq to confront the force of the Imam Husayn, which was moving towards Kufa, but decided to join Husayn at the critical moment, and was killed in the final battle.²⁴ After studying with his father and other members of his family, Muhammad al-Hurr went on to study with the great-grandson of the Second Martyr and others who transmitted his teaching. Then he went to Persia and taught at Mashhad under the dome of the shrine. Unlike most of the scholars from Jabal 'Amil, his inclinations were not towards the *Usuli* school but towards that of the revived school of the *Akhbaris*, who insisted on strict adherence to the letter of the hadith and were suspicious of too much reliance on reasoning. His most influential work was *Wasa'il al-shi'a ila tahsil masa'il al-shari'a*, a collection of hadith concerned with legal subjects.²⁵

21. al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, vol. 5, pp. 88–97; Muḥammad Amīn al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-athar fī aʿyān al-qarn al-hādī ʿashar* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Wahbiyya, 1284/1867–68), vol. 3, pp. 440–55; al-Baḥrānī, *Lu'lu'āt al-Baḥrayn*, pp. 16–23.

22. Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Aʿyān al-shi'a*, vol. 27, pp. 213–14; al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, vol. 5, pp. 132–3; al-Hurr al-'Amili, *Amal al-amil*, vol. 2, pp. 79–80.

23. al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, vol. 4, pp. 417–20; Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Aʿyān al-shi'a*, vol. 49, pp. 166–7.

24. M. J. Kister, 'al-Hurr b. Yazid', *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2nd edn), 3, p. 588.

25. G. Scarcia, 'al-Hurr al-'Amili', *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd edn), 3, pp. 588–9; Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Aʿyān al-shi'a*, vol. 44, pp. 52–64; al-Hurr al-'Amili, *Amal al-amil*,

Like the other immigrant scholars, Muhammad al-Hurr founded a family that carried on the tradition of learning and official service and belonged to the religious elite of Persia. Some sense of difference, some memory of the country from which they had come and pride in its place in Shi'i history, seems, however, to have continued to exist. When the Shaykh al-Baha'i gave up his official position and started his life of wandering, there may have been more than one reason for it, but he himself evoked the image of a certain way of life, which, in his view, was more worthy than that of a Court *'alim*. He regretted, he said, that his life was not like that of the Second Martyr who looked after his vineyard at night and gave himself to study in the daytime, or like that of the Martyr's teacher, Shaykh Ali al-Maysi, who gathered firewood for himself and his students at night.²⁶

The Shaykh al-Baha'i's travels took him back to his land of birth, and he was well enough known there among Sunni scholars to have a long entry in one of the main biographical dictionaries of the eleventh Islamic century, al-Muhibbi's *Khulasat al-athar*. Al-Muhibbi records that he visited Cairo, Jerusalem, Damascus, and Aleppo, as well as Jabal 'Amil. He was well received and praised, but had to act with caution. In Jabal 'Amil the people came out to meet him in waves, and he was afraid that this would reveal his true situation. Engaging in theological discussion in Aleppo, he told a Sunni shaykh in private: 'I am a Sunni, I love the Companions of the Prophet, but what should I do? Our sultan is a Shi'i and kills the Sunni men of learning.'²⁷

Muhammad al-Hurr gave more explicit expression to his special feeling for the place of his birth. His biographical dictionary of Shi'i scholars is divided into two parts: the first, entitled *Amal al-amil fi taraiim 'ulama' Jabal 'Amil*, deals entirely with scholars from Jabal 'Amil, while the second part includes scholars from all the rest of the Shi'i world. In the introduction he gives eight reasons why he has accorded this priority to Jabal 'Amil.²⁸ The first reason, quite simply, is the preference that is due to one's place of origin (*watan*); he quotes the famous hadiths, *hubb al-watan min al-iman* and *min iman al-rajul hubbuhu li qawmihi*. In giving the other seven reasons, he tries to provide a rational basis for this natural preference. The Shi'ism of Jabal 'Amil is the oldest of all: he mentions the story of Abu Dharr. A large number of learned and pious men have come from this community. No country has produced more or better Imami scholars: there is no village that has not given birth to them; an author is quoted to the effect that one-fifth of all the

Imami scholars of the later period come from Jabal 'Amil. Many prophets and ulema have their tombs there.

He also gives three quotations from the Koran, which can be interpreted as referring to *Bilad al-Sham* of which it forms part. In *Surat al-Ma'ida* there is a reference to 'the holy land': 'O my people enter the Holy Land which God has prescribed for you.'²⁹ Hadiths are quoted to show that this refers to *Bilad al-Sham*. In the first verse of *Surat al-Isra'* ('Glory be to Him who carried His servant by night from the Holy Mosque to the Further Mosque the precincts of which we have blessed') the expression 'the Further Mosque' is interpreted in the way that is normal in later commentaries, as referring to the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, and its 'precincts' can be regarded as including Jabal 'Amil.³⁰ In *Surat Ibrahim*, Abraham is depicted as addressing God: 'I have made some of my seed to dwell in a valley where there is no sown land by Thy Holy House; our Lord ... provide them with fruits.'³¹ Once more, a common later interpretation of this passage is given: God ordered the angel Gabriel to cut out a piece of the Jordan valley, circumambulate the Haram seven times with it, and put it in the place where it now is, at al-Ta'if, and from which the produce is taken to Mecca. The Jordan valley is part of *Bilad al-Sham*, and so this too can be taken to include Jabal 'Amil.

Finally, Muhammad al-Hurr records a saying by the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, transmitted by Ibn Babawayh and the First Martyr but for which he admits that there is no solid textual basis. Asked what would be the condition of his people in the time of the Occultation of the Twelfth Imam, the Imam replied that the people of a district in *Bilad al-Sham* – the district of al-Shaqif and that lying on the shores of the sea and the lower slopes of the mountains – would be 'truly our partisans and helpers and brothers ... their hearts inclined to us and severe upon our enemies, the rudder of the ship in the state of Occultation.'³²

Acknowledgements

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vol. 1, Introduction, pp. 8–66 and pp. 141–54.

26. Muhsin al-Amīn, *A'yan al-shi'a*, vol. 26, p. 235. In al-Juba'i al-'Amili, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, vol. 2, p. 155, the story about gathering firewood is related of the Second Martyr himself.

27. al-Muhibbi, *Khulāṣat al-athar*, vol. 3, p. 443.

28. al-Hurr al-'Amili, *Amal al-amil*, vol. 1, pp. 11 ff.

29. Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 5, 24.

30. Ibid., pp. 18 n1.

31. Ibid., pp. 14, 37.

32. al-Hurr al-'Amili, *Amal al-amil*, vol. 1, pp. 15–16.

History and Self-Image: The ʿAmili Ulema in Syria and Iran (Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries)

Rula Jurdi Abisaab

Today Jabal ʿAmil or ʿAmila is located in southern Lebanon, but from the medieval to the early modern period it comprised the region of southern Mount Lebanon and upper Galilee in Palestine, stretching from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the Sea of Galilee in the east, and from Safad and its vicinity in the south to the Awwali River in the north. It is significant to note that in the fifteenth century, the application of the term ʿAmili was extended to all Twelver Shiʿis residing in the Syrian regions of Tripoli, Kisrawan and Baalbek and not only Jabal ʿAmil proper.¹

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first illuminates the religious milieu of Jabal ʿAmil and provides the historical context for the political conflicts between the ʿAmilis on the one hand, and the Mamluk (1260–1517) and Ottoman authorities in Syria (1517–1918) on the other. I highlight the social order within which leading ʿAmili theologians operated and defined their intellectual production and juridical thought. The emigration of numerous ʿAmili theologians and their families to Safavid Iran was in part encouraged by the attempts of the Safavid monarchs to tailor their deistic rule to a state-operated Shiʿism.²

1. I use the term Shiʿi to denote Twelvers and will refer to other Shiʿi groups by their specific names.
2. For an in depth study of this development, see Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2004), Chapter 1.

The second section of this chapter focuses on prominent ʿAmili clerics in Iran, exploring their relations with the Safavid shahs, the Iranian aristocrats and the Qizilbash princes. Societal demands and political realities slowly transformed the legal views and practices of the *émigré* Syrian scholars and their descendants. Indeed, ʿAmili thought and clerical leadership served, reworked and only rarely rejected the socio-religious policies of the Safavid sovereigns during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

SHIʿISM, 'HERESY' AND MAMLUK SOVEREIGNTY IN THE MOUNTAINS OF KISRAWAN, 692/1292–705/1305

Much of the literature on the Shiʿi populations of Mamluk and Ottoman Syria, and their relations with Sunni governors, seems inadequate. Representative of this literature are Urbain Vermeulen's 'The Rescript against the Shiʿis and Rafidites of Beirut, Saida and District (746 AH/AD 1363)' and C. H. Imber's 'The Persecution of the Ottoman Shiʿis according to the *mühimme defterleri*, 1565–1585'.³ Both treat the multifaceted and complex relations between Shiʿis and Sunnis somewhat anachronistically and suggest the existence of a systematic Sunni 'policy' to dispense with the Shiʿi presence. Proponents of this view invariably reduce the wealth of historical data to examples of primordial hostility, persecutions and counter persecutions. Their narratives undermine the internal social setting of Jabal ʿAmil, and the diverse and shifting local interests of the provincial elites, and those of the Mamluk and Ottoman authorities in Syria.

In contrast to the above approach, Abdul-Rahim Abu Husayn and Andrew Newman denied any Ottoman repression or attack on Syrian Shiʿis. To argue their point, however, they refracted ʿAmili–Ottoman relations through the prism of religious dogma.⁴ Abu Husayn, like Newman, remains silent on the execution of prominent Shiʿi scholars like Shamseddin Muhammad ibn Makki, known as al-Shahid al-Awwal (d.786/1384). Furthermore, Newman marginalizes the socio-religious motives behind the execution of yet another notable scholar, namely Zayneddin al-ʿAmili, known as al-Shahid al-Thani (d.966/1558). A thorough analysis of ʿAmili and Ottoman biographical dictionaries and local histories, leads

3. See Urbain Vermeulen, 'The Rescript against the Shiʿite and Rafidites of Beirut, Saida and District (746 AH/AD 1363)', *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*, 4 (1973): 169–75; C. I. Imber, 'The Persecution of the Ottoman Shiʿites according to the *mühimme defterleri*, 1565–1585', *Der Islam*, 56 (1979): 245–73.
4. Abdul-Rahim Abu Husayn, 'The Shiites in Lebanon and the Ottomans in the 16th and 17th Centuries', in *Convegno sul tema La Shiʿa nell'impero Ottomano: Roma, 15 Aprile 1991* (Rome: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1993), p. 118; Andrew Newman, 'The Myth of the Clerical Migration to Safavid Iran', *Die Welt des Islams*, 33 (1993): 66–112.

us to question both approaches including those prevalent among ʿAmili scholars of pre-modern Syria on the nature of intra-communal relations among Shiʿis and Sunnis, and the political encounters between prominent Shiʿi theologians and the Mamluk and Ottoman authorities. Stefan Winter raised significant points about this historiography. He accurately noted that the Mamluk sultanate did not invest an anti-Shiʿi stance to legitimize itself politically.⁵ Even though he suggests that religious persecution in the coastal districts ‘bore the imprint of official imperial policy’, he adds later that ultimately Syrian society expressed ambivalence towards Shiʿism rather than pure rejection.⁶

The survival of Shiʿism in Jabal ʿAmil allows one to deduce that neither Mamluk nor Ottoman officials envisioned any large-scale, purposive or consistent policies for the eradication of Shiʿis. Therefore, it should come as no surprise to us that a profoundly articulated Shiʿi creed and an impressive body of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) survived in Jabal ʿAmil under restrictive – but not impossible – circumstances. Notwithstanding, the official apparatuses of both societies projected a conscious image of Shiʿis as non-orthodox Muslims and embellished the theme of their *rafḍ* (recusance), based on the rejection of the foundations of Sunni political rule. The proclivity for dissent in Shiʿi political thought was no doubt threatening to these governments. Abu Husayn noted that no discrimination against the Shiʿis was evident in the Ottoman records of *mühimme defterleri*, and contended that accusations of ‘heresy’ and ‘apostasy’ were usually directed against Nusayris and Druze. In the same vein, Newman argued that indicative of the freedom the ʿAmilis enjoyed in their homeland during the sixteenth century is the fact that no checkpoints were instigated by Ottoman officials to identify or search the luggage of travelling Shiʿis.⁷ I would argue, however, that theoretically Sunni rulers relegated multiple versions of Imamism to a constructed sphere of ‘heresy’. A Mamluk ordinance issued in 764/1362 forbade the inhabitants of Sidon, Beirut and its provinces to adhere to the faith of the Shiʿi *rafida* (recusants), a ‘heretical’ group in Beirut and its suburbs spreading blasphemous beliefs such as *mutʿa* (temporary marriage), the cursing of the Companions of the Prophet, and the defamation of his wife, ʿAisha.⁸ But this is not to say that an official denunciation of Shiʿism furnishes the basis or motive for Mamluk and Ottoman punitive actions against Shiʿi communities or ulema. Rather, ‘heresy’ must be seen as a constructed and shifting entity that the government had periodically applied to Sunni dissidents and

5. Stefan H. Winter, ‘Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Makki “al-Shahid al-Awwal” (d.1384) and the Shiʿah of Syria’, *Mamluk Studies Review*, 3 (1999): 181.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 173, 181.

7. Newman, ‘The Myth of the Clerical Migration’.

8. Abuʿl-ʿAbbās Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī (d.821/1418) *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā fī šināʿat al-inshā*, vol. 13 (Cairo: Al-Maṭbaʿa al-Amīriyya, 1337/1918), pp. 248–9.

Shiʿis alike who challenged its authority or legitimacy. Furthermore, the popular expression of Twelver Shiʿism was not always sharply demarcated from other Shiʿi sects or, for that matter, from heterodox and Sufi Sunni expressions. Shiʿi practices were at times confused with Nusayri, Druze and Ismaʿili practices among the learned and the laity alike.

Yet even where Syrian governors and judges did form clear ideas about various Shiʿi groups, these ideas did not determine the political actions they took against their members. Rather, a wide range of social, economic and political considerations at the provincial and state levels led to changeable ‘policies’ toward Shiʿis. For Mamluk purposes, Druze, Ismaʿili, Nusayri or Twelver Shiʿi were first ‘reinvented’ as non-Muslim, and then treated as heretical whenever any of their members proved to be a menace to the dynasty’s stability and sovereignty. Once they ‘transformed’ into infidels, their rights were forfeited and their lives were at stake. In other words, the discussion of the Shiʿi rejection of Abu Bakr’s and Umar’s caliphates and the association drawn between this stance and apostasy was the outcome rather than the cause of the suspicion some Syrian officials harboured against prominent Shiʿi jurists on the basis of personal competition and social interest.

The Mamluks launched four campaigns against Mount Kisrawan, a highland region northeast of Beirut, between 692/1292 and 705/1305, and declared them an Islamic *jihad* (holy war) to eradicate Shiʿi ‘heresy’.⁹ The Hanbali scholar Taqiaddin Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya (728/1328) became the mouthpiece of Islamic orthodoxy during these campaigns, which he presented to the public as a sacred war against unbelief and blasphemy.

In the official version of the Mamluk expedition there is neither a consistent presentation of motives nor clarification of the specific identity of the Shiʿi sect implicated in the Kisrawani rebellions. Against sources that emphasized religious reasons for the campaigns, the Mamluk chroniclers Baybars al-Mansuri (d.725/1325) and Qutbeddin al-Yunini (d.726/1326) argued that they were a political

9. Donald Little, *An Introduction to Mamluk Historiography* (Montreal: McGill–Queen’s University Press, 1970), p. 45. Little presents the varied approaches of a number of leading Mamluk chroniclers toward the Kisrawani rebellions including, Abuʿl-Fidaʿ (who was the sultan of Hama in 1320–21), *al-Mukhtaṣar fī tārikh al-bashar*, 4 vols (Istanbul, 1286/1869–70) and Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Dawādār (d.725/1325), *Kitāb al-tuḥfa al-mulūkiyya fī l-dawla al-Turkiyya*, ed. A-R. S. Ḥamdān (Cairo: Al-Dār al-Miṣriyya al-Lubnāniyya, 1987). See also Qutb al-Dīn Mūsā ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī al-Baʿlabakkī al-Ḥanbalī (d.726/1326), *Dhayl mirʾāt al-zamān* (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʾārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1954–61), p. 130; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (d.732/1331–2), *Nihāyat al-ʿarab fī funūn al-adab*, vol. 31 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Injīliyyūn al-Miṣriyya, 1412/1992), pp. 407–8.

measure against the Kisrawanis' collaboration with the Mongols.¹⁰ Al-Yunini explains that in 699/1299 Jamaledin Aqush al-Afram spearheaded a military force against 'Jabal Kisrawan wa'l-Durziyya' in retribution for their mistreatment of the Mamluk army.¹¹ The Kisrawanis were accused of giving refuge to the retreating Mongol soldiers after the battle of 'Ayn Jalut in 659/1260 and of mistreating those of the Mamluk soldiers who fled from the Bekaa Valley and Wadi al-Taym during a Mongol raid in 686/1287.¹² Two later chroniclers, Shihabeddin Ahmad al-Nuwayri (d.732/1331–2) and Salih b. Yahya (d.c.850/1446) portrayed the last three campaigns as a retaliation for the atrocities the Kisrawanis had committed against the Mamluk soldiers after their defeat at the hands of the Mongols in the battle of Wadi al-Khaznadar in 699/1299.¹³

Before the Mamluks embarked on their final expedition, the Kisrawanis had refused to defray the high penalty exacted upon them in reward for their harassment of the Mamluk soldiers. Evidently, the Kisrawani challenge to Mamluk authority can be seen in the same light as the revolts against abusive Mamluk taxation, which fomented several uprisings in Syrian towns and had on occasions drawn massive popular support.¹⁴ Al-Yunini asserts that in the 699/1299 assault, which took less than two weeks, the Kisrawanis were defeated, their lands confiscated and they were forced to pay a large amount of money and return what they had taken from the Mamluk army.¹⁵ Around 50,000 Mamluk soldiers led the final expedition, which devastated the Kisrawani villages, killing a large number of their inhabitants and forcing the rest to flee the region to Jezzine and its vicinity,

the Bekaa and Baalbek. The latter areas were known for their Twelver Shi'i populations, suggesting that the main religious sect involved in the confrontation was Twelver Shi'i.¹⁶

Philip Hitti, who took at face value the statements of the seventeenth-century Maronite historian Istifan al-Duwayhi, concluded that Kisrawan was 'populated by Christians (Maronites and Jacobites), Druze, Shi'is and Nusayris'.¹⁷ Hitti, followed by Robert Irwin, reflected that the dominant religious sect in Kisrawan was the Druze and claimed that Ibn Taymiyya's fatwa was mainly directed against them and the Nusayris. In the same vein, Albert Hourani wrote that the Mamluk punitive actions against Kisrawan 'were directed not so much against the Twelver Imamis as against the more extreme and uncompromising groups, the Isma'ilis and the Nusayris, who, living as they did near to the Mediterranean coast, could be regarded as posing a political as well as a religious danger'.¹⁸

But judging from the motives of the expedition expounded above and the authorities' deliberate confusion of the identities of the Shi'is, Druze and Nusayris, we are driven to a different conclusion. In *Subh al-a'sha*, al-Qalqashandi proclaims that Ibn Taymiyya's fatwa was directed against the Druze who belong to a 'fourth' Shi'i group, and whose suppression is worthier and more essential than that of Armenians because the latter are enemies outside *dar al-Islam* while the former are inside enemies.¹⁹ But al-Qalqashandi's observations prove unreliable for he himself admits, when listing the beliefs of the Imami Shi'is of the 'second' group, that he has no knowledge of the areas they inhabit in the Syrian provinces.²⁰ One may add that al-Qalqashandi was not acquainted with Kisrawan itself, nor could he identify its dominant sect, let alone the historical significance of the Mamluk punitive expeditions against it.

In retrospect, Kisrawan, as Kamal Salibi also suggested, was overwhelmingly Twelver Shi'i, with a minority of Druze and possibly a small community of Christians.²¹ Both the Maronites and Druze sustained good relations with the Mamluk authorities at a time when the Twelver Shi'is' loyalties were circumspect. To modify Hourani's observation, it was the Twelver Shi'i peril to the Mamluks and not the heterodox Isma'ili one that grew more visible because

16. Šāliḥ ibn Yahyā, *Tārīkh Bayrūt*, pp. 28–9 and 96.

17. Philip Hitti, *Lebanon in History* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1962), pp. 325–6.

18. Albert Hourani, 'From Jabal 'Amil to Persia' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 49 (1986): 133 (p. 52 of the reprinted version in this book).

19. Al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-a'shā*, vol. 13, pp. 248–9.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

21. Kamal Salibi, 'Mount Lebanon under the Mamluks', in S. Seikaly, R. Baalbeki and P. Dodd, eds, *Quest for Understanding: Arabic and Islamic Studies in Memory of Malcolm H. Kerr* (Beirut: AUB Press, 1991), p. 19.

10. Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-ʿarab*, vol. 31, pp. 407–8; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl mirʾāt al-zamān*, p. 130; See Li Guo, 'The Bahri Mamluks as Witnessed by a Syrian Historian, 1297–1302 in al-Yūnīnī's *Dhayl Mirʾat al-Zaman*' (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1993), pp. 19 and 130. I thank Li Guo for bringing to my attention the subtle readings of al-Yunini's accounts and reflections, juxtaposed against his socio-religious background.

11. Li Guo, 'The Bahri Mamluks', p. 130.

12. Šāliḥ b. Yahyā (d. c.1446), *Tārīkh Bayrūt* (Beirut, 1986), pp. 26–8; al-Maqrīzī (d.1442), *Kitāb al-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Lajnat al-Taʿlīf wa al-Tarjama wa al-Nashr, 1934–58), p. 12; Muḥammad ʿAlī Makkī, *Lubnān min al-fath al-ʿarabī ilā al-fath al-ʿuthmānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahār, 1991), pp. 220–1. For a detailed assessment of the battle of 'Ayn Jalut see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 26–48.

13. Donald Little, *An Introduction to Mamluk Historiography*, p. 45; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, pp. 1 and 223.

14. Ira Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 147–9. Lapidus argued that in Syrian provinces such protest were more threatening than in the larger metropolis of Cairo due to the organizational potential of the cohesive communities of the Syrian towns.

15. Li Guo, 'The Bahri Mamluks', p. 130.

of Kisrawan's strategic location near the Mediterranean coast. The Isma'ilis, to whom the Druze and Nusayris are related, were brutally crushed by the Mongols in Alamut in 654/1256 and could not be viewed as congenial to their cause against the Mamluks.

As for the choice of Ibn Taymiyya as the Mamluk propagandist for the campaign, it is noteworthy that he was a controversial figure among Sunnis themselves, a number of whom considered him 'at the very least an heretic'.²² Furthermore, his fatwa against the Kisrawanis denounced a number of tenets that could be neither coherently nor systematically attributed to an exclusive Shi'i group. His denunciation of their 'heresy' even extended to the doctrines of scholars like Nasireddin Tusi (d.672/1274). Only in few scholastic circles was it possible for Sunnis clearly to differentiate a Druze, Nusayri or Shi'i on the basis of general doctrinal statements.²³ It is not surprising then that Mamluk officials depicted al-Shahid al-Awwal as a Nusayri and accused him of nurturing beliefs that conformed to the Druze sect. During the Ottoman period too some Syrian scholars considered another leading Shi'i jurist, Ali ibn Abd al-Ali al-Karaki (d.940/1533), to be a Druze.²⁴

INTELLECTUAL TRANSFORMATION AND POLITICAL DISSENT: THE TWO MARTYRS OF JABAL 'AMIL

Modern Shi'i scholars project a distinct historical memory of Mamluk and Ottoman rule as periods of intellectual marginalization, and persecution of Shi'is.²⁵ This historical memory emerges more specifically from the ulema circles in connection with the Mamluk and Ottoman executions of two prominent theologians, namely Shamseddin Muhammad ibn Makki al-'Amili known as al-Shahid al-Awwal (734–86/1333–84) and Zayneddin al-'Amili known as al-Shahid al-Thani (911–96/1506–58). There is a tendency to collapse those two incidents into one uninterrupted Sunni policy against the 'Amilis even though they are separated by two centuries.

22. *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 'Ibn Taymiyya' (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974); Kāmil Muṣṭafā al-Shaybī, *al-Ṣīla bayna al-taṣawwuf wa'l-tashayyuf* (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1982), p. 130; Donald Little, 'The Detention of Ibn Taymiyya', in *History and Historiography of the Mamluks* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1986), p. 326.

23. See al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aṣḥā*, vol. 13, pp. 248–9 and 235. Al-Qalqashandī explicated the general doctrines of the Druze and the Twelver Shi'is.

24. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d.852), *Inbā' al-ghumr bi Anbā' al-'umr*, vol. 1 (Damascus: Maktab al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyya, 1390/1970), pp. 228 and 357; Wilferd Madelung, 'al-Karaki', s.v., *EI2*.

25. To name but a few, 'Alī Muruwwa, *al-Tashayyuf bayna Jabal 'Āmil wa Īrān* (London: Dār al-Rayyis, 1987); Muḥammad 'Alī Makkī, *Lubnān min al-fatḥ al-'arabī ilā al-fatḥ al-'Uthmānī*; 'Alī Darwīsh, *Jabal 'Āmil bayna 1516–1697* (Beirut: Dār al-Hādī, 1993).

Yusuf Tabaja had questioned this tendency and advanced important observations about the circumstances surrounding the death of al-Shahid al-Awwal.²⁶

When al-Shahid al-Awwal returned from Hilla to Jabal 'Amil, he was only 21 years old. Like 'Allama al-Hilli (d.726/1325) before him, he had departed from a current tendency to study exclusively under Shi'i mentors, except where dissimulation dictated otherwise. He recommended participation in Sunni scholastic circles and the utilization of facets of their legal theories so as to renew the corpus of Shi'i law. Whether in the area of *diraya* (a juridical method for sifting hadith) or *ijtihad* (a rational method for deriving legal norms), al-Shahid al-Awwal proved to be a creative contributor to the 'Allama's thought and methodology.²⁷ It was not rare for Shi'i scholars to appropriate Sunni concepts and juridical methods even if they did not popularize them. In his *ijaza* (scholarly licence) to his student Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khatun al-'Amili, he was certified to transmit statements from 40 Sunni scholars from Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Damascus and Jerusalem.²⁸

A number of Shi'i and Sunni sources reveal that al-Shahid al-Awwal was actively spreading Shi'i teachings among 'Amili students and playing a visible role in his local community. The same sources show, on the other hand, that some 'Amili social groups resisted and even challenged his activities. Two of al-Shahid's students, namely Taqiyyaddin al-Jabali al-Khiyami and Yusuf ibn Yahya, were believed to have defected from Twelver Shi'ism, adopting an 'extremist' stand against his teachings.²⁹ Yusuf ibn Yahya even submitted a report to the Mamluk authorities in support of al-Shahid's 'heresy', signed by 70 people of Jabal 'Amil who seemed to have renounced an earlier adherence to Twelver Shi'ism. A thousand of the inhabitants of the coastal areas such as Sidon and Beirut who were depicted in Shi'i sources as 'pseudo-Sunnis' (*al-mutasanninin*) also supported the accusations of Ibn Yahya in a report submitted to the *qadi* (judge) of Beirut.³⁰ Even

26. Yūsuf Tabāja, 'al-Shahīd al-awwal wa mashrū' al-qiyāda al-dīniyya al-siyasiyya fī Jabal 'Āmil' part 3, *al-'Irfān*, 80:7–8 (September–October 1996): 59–79; 'Namūzaj al-za'āma al-siyasiyya: Banū Bishāra fī Jabal 'Āmil', *al-'Irfān*, 80:9–10 (November–December 1996): 116–21.

27. Tunūkābūnī, *Qīṣaṣ al-'ulamā* (Teheran: s.n., 1320/1902), p. 241. Tunukabuni notes that al-Shahid al-Awwal studied with a thousand Sunni and Shi'i scholars altogether; Moojan Momen, *Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 95.

28. Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, vol. 107 (Teheran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiyya, 1956–72): 190; Muḥsin al-Amīn, *A'yan al-shī'a*, vol. 10 (Beirut: Dār al-Ta'aruf, 1986), p. 59. Majlisi included all the names of the Sunni scholars with whom al-Shahid al-Awwal studied and highlighted their careers.

29. *Al-Amīn*, A'yan, vol. 10, p. 61; Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī, *Lu'lu'at al-Baḥrayn fī l-ijāzāt wa tarājīm rijāl al-ḥadīth* (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwa', 1986), p. 146.

30. Other sources state that the report was submitted to the *qadi* of Sidon. See Āghā

more significant is a rare allusion to a Kurdish student of al-Shahid called Muhammad al-Yalushi who rose up in Jabal ʿAmil claiming prophethood and was put to death by the Mamluks during the reign of Sultan Barquq (1377–99).³¹

Clearly, the ʿAmili milieu hosted a varied number of popular Shiʿi persuasions and nurtured syncretic religious trends. On the political level, one concludes that al-Shahid al-Awwal came first to the attention of the Mamluk officials not through a confrontation with a Sunni scholar or official but rather through his involvement in a social struggle at the local level among a number of contending groups, presumably with different Shiʿi leanings and motivated by various political interests. He seemed also to have faced a number of competitors for religious leadership and had to strive to maintain his professional and social position. From the point of view of the *qadi* of Sidon, however, reports against him pointed to open involvement in spreading Shiʿi teachings that ran counter to orthodox Sunnism. Added to that was the animosity he incurred from scholars like Ibn Jamaʿa, who occupied a critical post at the Damascene Court of Sultan Barquq. In Sunni accounts, the list of accusations against him includes his *rafd*, his defamation of ʿAisha and the first two caliphs, along with following the Nusayri faith and declaring wine drinking licit.³² He was killed by the sword, then crucified, stoned and burned.³³ A close look at al-Shahid al-Awwal's intellectual activity and the relations he maintained with a number of students disclose clear political ambitions, which Mamluk officials found threatening.³⁴

Ambitious ʿAmili ulema whose legal views and practices had a direct bearing on political conformity feared persecution at the hand of the central authorities.

Buzurg Tihirānī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ʿulam al-shiʿa*, vol. 8 (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1975), pp. 205–7; Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 107, pp. 185–90.

31. Ibn Fahd al-Makkī (d.871/1467) *Laḥẓ al-alḥāẓ* (Damascus: Maṭbaʿat al-Tawfīq, 1928–29), p. 168.
32. Ibn Shuhba (d.851/1448) *Taʾrīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba*, vol. 1, ed. ʿAdnān Darwīsh, (Damascus: Al-Maʿhad al-ʿIlmī al-Faransī liʾl-Dirāsāt al-ʿArabiyya, 1977), pp. 134–5.
33. Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Amal al-āmil fī ʿulamāʾ Jabal ʿĀmil*, vol. 1 (Najaf, 1385/1965), p. 183.
34. For more on this see Rula Jurdi Abisaab, 'The ʿUlama of Jabal ʿAmil in Safavid Iran, 1501–1736: Marginality, Migration and Social Change', *Iranian Studies*, 27:1–4 (1994): 103–22. Yusuf Tabaja also argued convincingly that the execution of al-Shahid al-Awwal was tied to 'politics and doctrine but that the former has precedence over the latter'. He believed that the relationship of Timur's ally and Sarbadarid ruler, Ibn al-Muʿayyad to al-Shahid al-Awwal alarmed the Mamluks. See Tabaja, 'al-Shahid al-awwal', p. 61. Despite Tabaja's rich and detailed account of these events, a number of his observations need further investigation for they are based on oral traditions, supposedly 'preserved' over centuries in Jabal ʿAmil, which cannot be fully verified. See *ibid.*, pp. 68–9.

This is clear in the case of al-Shahid al-Thani who, at least a decade before his death, was living in disguise and struggling to escape the watchful eye of the Ottomans.³⁵ He exercised extreme caution during his early practice of *ijtihād* in 944/1537 and was forced to obscure his identity so much that Ibn al-ʿUdi al-Jizzini, his student, was bewildered by al-Shahid al-Thani's production of legal works of distinction during this period.³⁶ Al-Shahid al-Thani thought of cancelling his trip to Mosul, Iraq in 946/1539 when his Shiʿi identity became known to a few men who were travelling on the same caravan with him.³⁷

In 937/1530, four years after the death of his mentor Shaykh Ali al-Maysi (d.933/1526), known also as al-Muhaqqiq, al-Shahid al-Thani travelled to Damascus where he was exposed, probably for the first time, to philosophy, astronomy and medicine; and he was introduced to the illuminationist philosophy of Shaykh al-Ishraq, Shihabeddin Yahya Suhrawardi (d.587/1191), under the Sunni scholar Shamseddin ibn Makki. These fields of study seemed lacking in the curriculum at the *madrasas* (schools) of Jabal ʿAmil in general, and Mays al-Jabal in particular, where al-Shahid al-Thani first joined the study circle of al-Maysi in 925/1519.³⁸ He also studied the *sharḥ* (commentary) of *Ashkal al-taʿsis* on geometry by al-Chughmini and Qadi Zada, the Ottoman scholar with whose grandson he was later to establish solid ties.³⁹

Despite al-Shahid al-Thani's caution in disclosing his *ijtihād* activities, they became widespread in 948/1541.⁴⁰ His application of *ijtihād* was evident early in his interpretation of *Irshad al-adhḥan* by al-ʿAllama, produced piecemeal and departing from previously set canons in Shiʿi scholarship. His approach was *mazji* (synthetic), mixing the *matn* (text) with the interpretation – a common characteristic of Sunni works. Quite consciously, al-Shahid al-Thani reflected in *al-Rawda al-Bahiyya* – itself a commentary on al-Shahid's legal work, *al-Lumʿa al-Dimashqiyya* – that having found such synthesis well grounded in Sunni commen-

35. ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī (d.1104/1696), *al-Durr al-manthūr min al-maʿthūr wa ḡayr al-maʿthūr*, vol. 2 (Qom: Kitābkhānah-yi ʿUmūmī-yi Āyat Allāh al-ʿUzmā Marʿashī Najafī, 1978), p. 183.
36. *Ibid.*; Muḥammad Bāqir Khwānsārī (d.1313/1895) *Rawḍāt al-jannāt fī aḥwāl al-ʿulamā waʾl-sādāt* (Beirut: Al-Dār al-Islāmiyya, 1991), vol. 2, pp. 287–8.
37. Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt*, vol. 3, p. 348.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 339. For information on the local *madrasas* that sprang up in Jabal ʿAmil, see Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt*, vol. 3, pp. 337–8; Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Khīṭat Jabal ʿĀmil* (Beirut: s.n., 1983), pp. 74, 341 and 362–3; al-Amīn, *Aʿyān*, vol. 8, p. 44; vol. 5, p. 93.
39. Al-Amīn, *Aʿyān*, vol. 7, p. 149; ʿAlī ibn Zayn al-Dīn, *al-Durr*, vol. 2, pp. 170–4.
40. ʿAlī ibn Zayn al-Dīn, *al-Durr*, vol. 2, pp. 169 and 183–4; Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt*, vol. 3, p. 356. Sharafeddin Sammak suspected he was a *mujtahid* in 946/1539.

taries, he wanted to make use of such commentaries in Shi'ism as well.⁴¹ Such adaptation would make legal texts more comprehensible and accessible, particularly outside clerical circles, and would fulfil a social need within the 'Amili community itself and its expanding scholastic influence.

Al-Shahid al-Thani's intellectual contributions were not economically successful, for in Jubā' he led an austere and hard life. He carried logs of wood on his donkey for his family during the night, taught during the day and occasionally tended his vineyard.⁴² Typical of most clerics of Jabal 'Amil, al-Shahid al-Thani could barely survive without access to teaching posts in the Ottoman Empire. In fact, his grandson, Ali ibn Muhammad al-'Amili, claimed that al-Shahid al-Thani also engaged in commerce, selling a kind of string and that he had to travel to distant places to distribute it.⁴³ Meanwhile, he decided to seek out social and political contacts in Istanbul. He described his visit favourably and there was no hint that he was accused of *rafd* or put on trial by Sunni ulema, as Mirza Afandi had indicated in his *Ta'liqat amal al-amil*.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, the *qadi* of Sidon seemed to have borne a personal grudge against al-Shahid al-Thani and felt undermined by him.⁴⁵ He was quick to declare him guilty of deriving legal decisions that ran counter to the four Sunni schools of law and branded him an innovator, thus threatening him with the most severe punishment. At that point al-Shahid al-Thani decided – as a pretext for hiding – to leave Jabal 'Amil on a pilgrimage in a covered caravan.⁴⁶

Curiously, before this discord reached such heights, the *qadi* had helped al-Shahid al-Thani obtain a teaching post at the *madrasa* of al-Nuriyya in Baalbek in 953/1546, where he taught the five *madhahib* (schools of law) and several religious disciplines. Al-Shahid al-Thani attracted Shi'i and Sunni students, befriending Baalbek's people with their varied religious persuasions, and maintained *ahsana suhbatan* (an ideal friendship) with each of them.⁴⁷ He looked back on his Baalbek days with great joy, seeing them as a unique phase of professional and social fulfilment in a life filled with socio-economic frustrations and religious discretion. He prided himself on being ranked among the top jurists as the *mufti kul firqa bima yuwafiqu madhhabaha* (the *mufti* of every religious sect in accordance with its school of law). The threat to his life from various competitors grew in proportion

to his fame and, two years after starting to teach at al-Nuriyya school, he was forced to hide in the house of his student Ibn al-'Udi al-Jizzini. Fearing for his life, he contemplated writing his biography, sections of which remained extant through Ibn al-'Udi's report.⁴⁸ The sultan's officer who was ordered to bring al-Shahid al-Thani to Istanbul for trial in 966/1558 decided to kill him on his way back from Mecca lest he inform the sultan of the ill-treatment he had received from him. In Istanbul, under provocation from Sayyid Abd al-Rahim al-Abbasi who had both admired and befriended al-Shahid al-Thani, the sultan had the officer killed.⁴⁹

The 'Amili reaction to the tragic death of al-Shahid al-Thani released another set of narratives about relations with Sunni ulema. Hasan, the son of al-Shahid al-Thani, known as Sahib al-Ma'alim (d.1011/1602), attributed his father's death to his extensive interaction with Sunni scholars, around nineteen of them, and his candid use of politically-charged concepts in legal, jurisprudential and hadith works.⁵⁰ In the same vein, al-Hurr al-'Amili found al-Shahid al-Thani's extensive interaction with Ottoman Sunni scholars blameworthy and the source of his fate.

In brief, the two Shahids lacked the protection of a solid religious institution or a social base from which to launch their professional ambitions albeit under diverse historical circumstances. Internal struggles and dissent in Jabal 'Amil obstructed the goals of leading jurists, but again their execution was made possible by Mamluk and Ottoman measures to curtail and suppress Shi'i political activism that deviated from the officially-defined orthodoxy and its political underpinnings. In retrospect, the question of whether the Mamluks or Ottomans theoretically acknowledged or acted on clear distinctions among Shi'i sects has little bearing on their execution. Once they were identified as politically threatening to the ruling elite, the second step was to 'de-Islamize' them in concordance with a discourse of 'orthodoxy' that served and protected the government. To understand the full ramifications of the execution of two leading Shi'i scholars, one needs to examine the local social conflicts and the shifting definition and interpretation of 'orthodoxy' for the political purposes of the rulers. Mamluk and Ottoman rules can neither be simply summarized as fair or neutral toward Shi'is, nor for that matter can they be judged by a fixed persecution theory. Instead, vertical divisions and internal conflicts within each religious group, the ruling and the ruled, should be given greater expression in a historical investigation.

ÉMIGRÉ CLERICS IN SAFAVID PERSIA

In 907/1501 a militant Sufi order in Ardabil, supported by Turkoman devotees

41. Khwānsārī, *Rawdāt*, vol. 3, pp. 356–7; al-Amīn, *A'yan*, vol. 7, p. 145.

42. Khwānsārī, *Rawdāt*, vol. 3, p. 345.

43. 'Alī ibn Zayn al-Dīn, *al-Durr*, vol. 2, p. 162; al-Amīn, *A'yan*, vol. 7, p. 147.

44. Mīrzā 'Abd Allāh Afandī Isfahānī, *Ta'liqāt amal al-amil* (Qom: Maktabat Āyat Allāh Mar'ashī, 1411H–Q/1991), pp. 52–3.

45. See Khwānsārī, *Rawdāt*, vol. 3, p. 363; al-Amīn, *A'yan*, vol. 7, p. 151.

46. Khwānsārī, *Rawdāt*, vol. 3, p. 363.

47. 'Alī ibn Zayn al-Dīn, *al-Durr*, vol. 2, pp. 178–82.

48. Ibid., pp. 183–4.

49. Khwānsārī, *Rawdāt*, vol. 3, pp. 352, 364.

50. Ibid., p. 364; al-Amīn, *A'yan*, vol. 7, pp. 153–4.

known as the Qizilbash and led by Shah Ismaʿil I, founded the Safavid Empire in Iran.⁵¹ Shortly after his investiture, Shah Ismaʿil (who ruled from 907/1501 until 930/1524) declared Twelver Shiʿism to be the religion of the new empire.⁵² Safavid monarchs seemed determined to convert Iran from Sunnism to Shiʿism, and to spread a literate urban version of Twelver Imami doctrine (as distinct from the folk Shiʿism of the Turkoman nomads).⁵³ The process of conversion to Shiʿism is best understood within the larger political framework of Ottoman–Safavid relations as an attempt to demarcate Safavid territory against Ottoman encroachments and to insulate its inhabitants from Sunni leanings.⁵⁴ Along with a steady suppression of millenarian movements, Sufi orders and philosophical–theosophical activities came the need for teachers who could disseminate the Shiʿi creed, and jurists who would

51. Roger Savory, “‘A Very Dull and Arduous Reading’: A Reappraisal of the History of Shah ʿAbbas the Great by Eskandar Beg Munshi”, in *Studies on the History of Safawid Iran* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987), pp. 19–20; H. R. Roemer, ‘The Safavid Period’, in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, eds P. Jackson and L. Lockhart (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 189–90; See also Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order and Societal Change in Shiʿite Iran from the beginning to 1890* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 105–8 for an analysis of the new developments brought by the Safavid normative order and religious policies.
52. The attempts at establishing Twelver Shiʿism as the official religion of the state occurred briefly in Mongol Iran during the fourteenth century under the ruler Oljeitu Khodabandeh. Yet the ulema’s efforts at converting the Mongols to Shiʿism remained largely futile because the latter were indifferent to both Sunnism and Shiʿism and indeed to all religious denominations. See Alessandro Bausani, ‘Religion under the Mongols’, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5; Bertold Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968). Michel Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Safawids: Shiʿism, Sufism, and the Gulāt* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1972), pp. 63–5 analyses the role played by ʿAllama al-Hilli (d.726/1325) in converting the Mongol ruler Oljeitu to Twelver Shiʿism. See also Momen, *Shiʿi Islam*, pp. 92–3.
53. See Roemer, ‘The Safavid Period’, pp. 195–8 for a discussion of the Shiʿi character of Safavid Sufism. See also Jean Aubin, ‘La Politique religieuse des Safavides’, in *Le Shiʿisme imamite* (Paris: PUF, 1970), p. 239. Aubin elucidates the parallel development between the elimination of Safavid heterodox elements and the consolidation of Twelver Shiʿism in Iran. For a discussion of the process of the ‘Shiʿitization of Sunnism’ in northwestern Iran and Anatolia, see Claude Cahen, ‘Le Problème du shiʿisme dans l’Asie Mineure turque préottomane’, in *Le Shiʿisme imamite*, p. 126.
54. A. K. S. Lambton, ‘Quis Custodiet Custodes?’ *Studia Islamica*, 5 (1955): 137–41; John R. Walsh, ‘The Historiography of Ottoman–Safavid Relations in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, in Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt, eds, *Historians of the Middle East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 196–209.

define and apply the *shariʿa* (Islamic law) in accordance with the Shiʿi *madhhab* (school of law). The early Safavid monarchs, more specifically Shah Ismaʿil and his son Shah Tahmasb (ruled 930/1524–984/1576), thus invited Shiʿi ulema from Arabic-speaking lands – Iraq, Bahrain and Jabal ʿAmil – to reinforce those in Iran. Among these, the contribution of the scholars and divines of Jabal ʿAmil became especially notable, for they started to accumulate significant power and prestige under Safavid patronage. By the seventeenth century, many of the ulema residing in Safavid Iran – around 156 – were of ʿAmili background.⁵⁵ Once in Iran, most of them found an institutional niche in the more restricted religious offices of the *shaykh al-Islam* (the highest religious dignitary within a city) of the important cities, or as *pishnamaz* (prayer leaders) for the royal Court or great city mosques. In addition, they held posts as teachers in the *madrasas* (religious schools) where they transmitted their knowledge to a network of students and followers.⁵⁶

The theologians who migrated to Iran with their families came from the villages of Jabal ʿAmil proper and the regions of Bekaa (including Baalbek) whose Shiʿi population was lumped under ‘ʿAmili’ in an extended usage denoting unity of religious faith. The well-known villages of the Bekaa were Karak Nuh, Mashghara, Furzul and Baalbek. Their counterparts in Jabal ʿAmil were Jubaʿ, ʿAynatha (ʿInatha), Jezzine, Mays al-Jabal, Shahrur, Itraʿ, Insar, Tibnin, Nabatiyya, Jubayl, al-Bazuriyya, Marjʿiyyun and ʿAyn Qana.⁵⁷ The *émigré* families from Karak Nuh were the Abd al-Alis, al-Minshar, al-Musawi, Abd al-Samad, al-Aʿraj, Qamar, and Shihabeddin. Those migrating from Jubaʿ were the Abd al-Samad, Abi Jamiʿ (and their descendants the Muhyieddins), ‘Silsilat al-Dhahab’ of al-Shahid al-Thani, Nureddin, and al-Hurr, who later moved to Mashghara. The families of al-Shahid al-Awwal (Ibn Makki al-Matlabi), and al-ʿUdi came from Jezzine. The families of Abd al-Alis, Muflih, and Sawdun came from Mays al-Jabal. The families of Khatun, and Yunus al-Zahiri came from ʿAynatha. The Harfush came from Baalbek, and al-Futuni from al-Nabatiyya al-Fawqa, and the descendants of Fakhreddin al-ʿAmili, from al-Bazuriyya. The village origins of several migrant ʿAmilis remains obscure especially since not all of them came to Iran directly from Syria, but resided for a while in Najaf and Mecca.

In Iran, the incoming ʿAmilis resided in the cities of Herat and Mashhad in Khorasan, and in Isfahan, Qazvin, Tabriz, Teheran and Kashan among others. A small number of emigrants lived in the regions of Hyderabad in India, maintaining strong ties with the ulema of Iran, and working within a parallel intellectual rubric.

In the ensuing years after the Safavid victory, the ʿAmilis became the van-

55. Momen, *Shiʿi Islam*, p. 123; Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, pp. 125–30.

56. Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, pp. 130–1.

57. See al-Amīn, *Khiṭat Jabal ʿAmil*; Aḥmad Abū Saʿd, *Muʿjam asmāʾ al-usūr waʾl-ashkhās wa lamahāt min tārīkh al-ʿāʾilāt*, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm liʾl-Malāyīn, 1997).

guards of clerical Shi'ism, which left its imprint on Iran's history and political outlook. An 'orthodox' version of Shi'ism with all the details of a legalistic mindset coincided with Safavid political vision and lent it coherence and legitimacy. The Safavid world that gave the 'Amilis their wide acclaim was socially and politically different from the homeland they left in Ottoman Syria. The religious syncretistic milieu, the courtiers' clashes and intrigues, the competition and rifts of the ruling elite, and the royal princes' turbulent lives were all scenes the 'Amilis were just starting to fathom.⁵⁸ Although the Arabic language was still a medium for religious scholastic expression, it was precisely under the Safavids that hadith compilations and doctrinal works of all sorts were being translated into Persian.⁵⁹ The 'Amilis, operating through the Court-based religious posts, were forced to master the Persian language; their students translated their instructions into Persian. Persianization went hand in hand with the popularization of 'mainstream' Shi'i beliefs.

Gradually, 'Amili jurists proved that they were not an addendum to the Shah's religious staff. They struggled to supplant heterodox precepts at the same time as they co-opted a few popular practices, which they introduced as 'standard' patterns of religious conduct. They brought to their official posts more than a professional's eagerness to excel and please his superiors. They were the proselytes of a new era that necessitated a redefinition of the jurist's role in society, and called for a new venture towards temporal authority and the Shi'i state.

AL-MUHAQQIQ AL-KARAKI AND THE SAFAVID STATE

Under Shah Isma'il I, Persian notables strove to check the power of the Qizilbash amirs, the military elite, which is something that could only have been possible with the Shah's agreement.⁶⁰ The Shah's 'persophile' policy was consciously

planned to prevent the Qizilbash from seizing all power. Of the five principal posts of state under Shah Isma'il I, the Qizilbash occupied the top three, namely those of the *vakil-e nafs-e nafis-e homayun* (the vice-regent of the Shah), the *amir al-umara* (commander-in-chief of the army), and the *qurchi-bashi* (guard commander).⁶¹ The latter two carried great import and charged their holders with considerable power. The remaining two posts of *vazir* (a 'super-minister') and *sadr* (administrator of religious endowments) went to the Persian aristocracy. But even between 918/1512 and until his death in 930/1524, when he selected three Persian notables to the office of *vakil* (viceroys), Shah Isma'il I was unable to achieve such balance between the Qizilbash and the Persian notables.⁶² As soon as the Qizilbash detected that the Shah was receptive to the ambitions of the second *vakil*, Mirza Shah Husayn Isfahani, they had him murdered in 929/1523.

The admission of Shi'i clerics into Safavid service added a new dimension to the political struggles between the Qizilbash and the Persian aristocracy, as well as to the relationship of both parties to the Shah. In 910/1504–5, almost a year after moving to Najaf from Jabal 'Amil, Ali ibn Abd al-Ali al-Karaki, known as al-Muhaqqiq al-Thani (d.940/1533), paid a visit to Shah Isma'il I in Isfahan.⁶³ Shah Isma'il tried to enlist the help of religious scholars in propagating Shi'ism in the newly conquered eastern provinces of Iran. On one of his visits to the Shah, al-Karaki witnessed the military preparations for the battle of Chaldiran against the Ottomans in 920/1514.⁶⁴ Towards the end of the Shah's reign, al-Karaki moved to central Iran and became well connected with the Safavid state.⁶⁵

It is unlikely that the *sadrs* were responsible for implementing Shi'ism, even though they held exclusive administrative authority over theologians and judges.⁶⁶ The coercive measures used against the above Sunni scholars were at odds with the 'Amili *mujtahids*' approach of self-conversion specifically championed by al-

61. Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, pp. 32–5.

62. Ibid., pp. 38–9.

63. Tihriani, *Tabaqat al-'alam al-shi'a: Ihyā' al-dāthir min al-qarn al-'ashir*, pp. 160–1; Muḥammad Muḥsin Tihriani, *al-Mashyakha aw al-isnād al-muṣaffā ilā āl al-Muṣṭafā* (Najaf: Maṭba'at al-Gharī, 1352H), pp. 55–6.

64. 'Abd Allāh Afandī Isfahānī (died twelfth century), *Riyāḍ al-'ulamā' wa hiyaḍ al-fuḍalā'*, vol. 3 (Qom: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Mar'ashī al-'Āmma, 1401), pp. 441–60.

65. Iskandar Munshī, *History of 'Abbas the Great = Tārīkh-i Ālamārā-ye 'Abbāsī by Eskandar Beg Monshi*, translated by Roger M. Savory (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 230–1.

66. Willem Floor, 'The Sadr or head of the Safavid religious administration, judiciary and endowments and other members of the religious institution', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (ZDMG)*, 150 (2000): 463 and 468–9.

58. Only recently have 'Amili (or southern Lebanese) scholars questioned the over-emphasis on the harmonious and amicable relations between the migrant 'Amilis and the Shahs. Ja'far al-Muhājir discusses the tensions and frustrations in the relations between 'Amili scholars and Safavid shahs in *al-Hijra al-'āmilīyya ilā Irān fī al-'aṣr al-ṣafawī: Asbābuhā al-tārīkhīyya wa natā'ijuhā al-thaqāfiyya wa al-siyāsiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Rawḍa, 1989). See also Dalāl 'Abbās, *Bahā' al-dīn al-'Āmilī: Adībān, faqīhān wa 'ālimān* (Beirut: Dār al-Ḥiwār, 1995).

59. See Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt*, vol. 4, pp. 361–2; Tihriani, *Tabaqat al-'alam al-shi'a: Ihyā' al-dāthir min al-qarn al-'ashir*, p. 152; Āghā Buzurg Tihriani, *al-Dharī ilā taṣānīf al-shi'a*, vol. 4 (Teheran, 1360), pp. 74, 78, 81, and 90–101; 'Abd al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī Khātūnābādī (d.1105), *Waqāyī' al-sinīn wa'l-a'wām, yā guzārishhā-yi sālyānah az ibtidā-yi khilqat tā sāl-i 1195 hijrī* (Teheran: Kitābforūshī-yi Islamiyya, 1973), pp. 458 and 500.

60. Ibid., pp. 230–1.

Muhaqqiq al-Thani, Ali ibn Abd al-Ali al-Karaki (d.940/1533).⁶⁷ For instance, he denounced the *sadrs*' command to execute Qadi Mir Husayn Yazdi and the *khatibs* of Kazerun in 909/1503–4 and the *shaykh al-Islam* of Khorasan, Farideddin Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'edaddin al-Taftazani in 916/1510–11. He preferred the use of controversion and public refutation of Sunni doctrines to achieve consent or 'voluntary' conversions to Twelver Shi'ism.⁶⁸ During the reign of Shah Tahmasb recurring incidents of conflict between the *sadr* and *mujtahid* implied that the latter had gained enough stature and power to challenge the authority of the former. On two occasions the 'Amili *mujtahid* caused the dismissal of a *sadr*.⁶⁹ We learn that around 937/1530–1 a group of ulema the Safavid Court barely recognized formed an alliance with Amir Ni'matullah al-Hilli, who had been appointed *sadr* in 935/1528–9, against al-Karaki. Among these were al-Mawla Husayn al-Ardabili, and al-Qadi Musafir, who encouraged al-Hilli to discuss the subject of Friday prayer during occultation in front of Shah Tahmasb. They hoped to support him in his debate with al-Karaki and struck a strong blow to the latter's status and credibility. They also found common cause with the main social group opposed to al-Karaki at the Court, namely the Persian aristocrats of the Safavid bureaucracy. The opposition that al-Karaki incurred from the aristocratic-administrative class is further illuminated by Hasan-e Rumlu's reference to some of the names mentioned in the Safavid chronicles. Among the *omara*' va *arkan-e dowlat-e shahi* (princes and state officials of the royal state) who sided with al-Hilli, were figures like Mahmud Beg Mohrdar (the keeper of the seal) and Malik Beg Khu'i.⁷⁰

Another Persian notable, Amir Ghiyatheddin Dashtaki Shirazi (d.948/1540), who was the joint *sadr* with al-Hilli, questioned al-Karaki's legal rulings. A notable descendant of a prominent Sunni family, Ghiyatheddin belittled al-Karaki and considered him an 'ignoramus'. Like other notables, he resented al-Karaki's intrusion in matters the *sadrs* had once governed and regulated. He disagreed with the way the *qibla* (direction of prayer) was furnished after al-Karaki altered it in

the regions of Iraq al-Arab and Khorasan.⁷¹ The Shah took al-Karaki's side and eventually dismissed Ghiyatheddin from office in 939/1532.⁷²

During the same year and as a visible sign of his eminence at the Court, Shah Tahmasb issued a *farman* declaring al-Karaki the *na'ib* (vicegerent/deputy) of the Imam and *khatam al-mujtahidin* (the seal of mujtahids).⁷³ The ardour with which al-Karaki defended the Shi'i faith placed him on the same pedestal as Nasireddin Tusi (d.672/1274); in fact he reinforced the legalistic rules of religious observances with such rigour and alacrity and went 'to such extreme limits in disseminating the Imami *madhhab* that some nicknamed him the inventor of the Shi'i religion'.⁷⁴ The volatile nature of the office of *sadr* throughout this episode of Safavid history is indicative of the Shah's uneasy relationship with the aristocratic candidates to this office and of his attempt to suppress their political ambitions by way of partially appeasing the powerful Qizilbash.⁷⁵ The Persian bureaucrats' power seems to have been critically diminished during the interim period following the dismissal of Ghiyatheddin when al-Karaki acted as the sole *sadr* until the advent of Mir Mu'izzeddin. Equally significant, as Said Amir Arjomand noted, the *farman* was the earliest indication of the privileged economic status that the Shi'i 'hierocracy' began to enjoy in Iran. Shah Tahmasb conferred extensive landholdings valued at 700 *tumans* annually on al-Karaki as hereditary *waqf* (religious endowments).

The ascendancy of the position of *mujtahid* under a prominent 'Amili like al-Karaki and its increasing challenge to the *sadrs* transpired at a time of marked Qizilbash supremacy. Safavid sources provide only a hint of this silent alliance between al-Karaki and the Qizilbash. In *Takmilat al-akhbar*, for example, Abdi Beg Shirazi noted that in 936/1532, when Chuha Sultan was appointed the tutor of Bahram Mirza, he left from Herat to Yazd, and from there to the winter quarters in

67. Ibid. For information on the educational background of the *sadr* class, see Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt*, vol. 7, p. 183.

68. This was expressed after the conquest of Herat.

69. Ḥasan-i Rūmlū, *Aḥsan al-tawārīkh*, ed. N. Seddon (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1931), p. 254; Munshī, *History*, vol. 1, p. 233; Savory, 'The Principal Offices of the Safavid State During the Reign of Tahmasb I', in *Studies*, p. 80. See also Savory, 'The Safavid Administrative System', in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, pp. 362–3.

70. Rūmlū, *Aḥsan*, p. 255; Muḥammad Yūsuf (born 988H) wa Ālihi Iṣfahānī, *Khuld-i barīn* (Teheran: Mawqūfāt-i Duktur Maḥmūd Afshār Yazdī, 1372H), p. 428; Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt*, vol. 4, p. 357.

71. Munshī, *History*, vol. 1, pp. 230–1; Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt*, vol. 4, pp. 357–8, and vol. 7, pp. 168–9. Mir Ghiyatheddin insisted that the decision concerning the direction of *qibla* fell within the expertise of mathematicians, not jurists. He argued that al-Karaki's attempt to change the direction of the *qibla* in all the mosques of Iraq al-Ajam with the full approval of the Shah, even if proven correct, could not be accepted or delivered without a geometrical figure that would display all the calculations and provide justification for what was not within the reach of al-Karaki. See 'Abdī Bayg Shīrāzī, *Takmilat al-akhbār: Tārīkh-i Ṣafaviyya az āghāz tā 978 hijrī qamarī* (Teheran: Nashr-i Nay, 1369/1990), p. 193. Shirazi indirectly implies in his account that Mir Ghiyatheddin's opinion on *qibla* was not insulting to al-Karaki but that Court officials blew the issue out of proportion.

72. Khātūnābādī, *Waqāyī' al-sinīn*, p. 360; Munshī, *History*, vol. 1, pp. 231–2; Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt*, vol. 7, pp. 168–9.

73. Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, pp. 133–4.

74. Al-Amīn, *A'yān*, vol. 8, p. 208.

75. See Munshī, *History*, vol. 1, p. 231.

Isfahan and, accompanied on this trip by 'mujtahid al-zaman', al-Karaki and the two arrived together at Isfahan. Immediately after supplying this information, Shirazi goes on to discuss the open disputes that emerged between al-Karaki and Ghiyatheddin, almost implying an accord between the Qizilbash element and al-Karaki.⁷⁶ The Turkoman amirs, one can safely note, could not have viewed al-Karaki's influence with suspicion, for only once did they vie with the Persian aristocracy over the post of *shaykh al-Islam*.⁷⁷ Clearly, they never gave the religious ranks much attention and the only *vakil* with whom they had no friction was the Iranian notable Najmeddin Abd al-Baqi (d.920/1514), mostly because he devoted more time to religious matters than to secular administration.⁷⁸ The *sadrs* on the other hand, having seen how the Shah swarmed al-Karaki with honorific titles and economic grants, were in a much more difficult position as a professional class whose territory had been mercilessly trespassed and whose control over religious duties had become precarious.

Caught in the vicissitudes of Safavid politics, al-Karaki must on occasions have left the Court at the Shah's request to avoid intense friction and threats when the Shah could no longer turn a deaf ear to the pressures of the Persian aristocracy.⁷⁹ Nonetheless, for the Shah to resist the Persian notables' pressures to the extent that he did may have meant that their opponents, the Qizilbash, had endorsed such a move.

The Shah felt secure about strengthening the position of the 'Amilis, who had no fundamental ties to any of the powerful and contending groups in Safavid society and who could easily become *bona fide* servicemen. One cannot fail to realize that the increasing desire of the young Tahmasb to expand the basis of his sovereignty through legalistic Islam had at times unforeseen political consequences, namely the growth in the socio-political role of the jurist in Shi'i society.

76. Shirāzī, *Takmilat al-akhbār*, pp. 66–7. Shirazi reflected that although al-Karaki emerged victorious in those debates, the *sadr* did not succumb to his *ijihad*.

77. Savory, 'The Principal Offices of Isma'īl I', pp. 95–6; Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', pp. 228–9.

78. Savory, 'The Significance of the Political Murder of Mirza Salman', in *Studies*, p. 167.

79. Ja'far al-Muhajir argued that al-Karaki pointed out in the introduction of his treatise *Risālat qāṭi'at al-lijāj fī taḥqīq ḥill al-kharāj* that he was forced to reside in Iraq for reasons he could not disclose. Al-Muhajir claimed that al-Karaki was referring to one of the instances in which he had to leave the Court. But the treatise was completed in 916/1510 when he had probably just received an invitation from Shah Isma'īl I along with other Najafi scholars to visit Herat and Mashhad. See Isfahānī, *Riyād*, vol. 3, pp. 441–60; al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī, *Rasā'il al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī*, vol. 1, eds M. al-Hassūn and M. al-Mar'ashī (Qom: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-'Uzmā al-Mar'ashī al-Najafī, 1409/1991), p. 237. See also al-Muhajir, *al-Hijra*, pp. 128–9.

A *shari'a*-based reading of religious conduct and its regulation slowly emerged from the heterodox and chiliastic ambience of Tahmasb's Sufi upbringing.⁸⁰

The alliance between the 'Amili Court scholars and the Qizilbash on the one hand, and the competition between them and the Persian notables on the other, must in turn have become articulated in ethnic terms. Nowhere is this clearer than in Khwandamir's assessment of the Arab ulema of Iran as opposed to the two prominent Turkoman historians, Hasan-e Rumlu and Eskandar Beg Monshi.⁸¹ It is not difficult to sense with what social group Khwandamir's loyalty lies, for he only permits comparison of Arab scholars with those from their ethnic background but not with Persians. The *naqib* Shamseddin Ali, who arrived in Khorasan from Najaf, is described as having a noted reputation for his knowledge and noble pedigree in 'Arabistan'.⁸² Furthermore, he explains that the Arab scholar Shaykh Zayneddin Ali, who took up the posts of *shaykh al-Islam* and *aqda al-qad'i* (grand jurist) in Herat, *dar al-saltana* (the seat of the empire), after 928/1522 was a leading figure 'among the Arab ulema'. In the same vein, Sayyid Ni'matullah al-Hilli who accompanied an anonymous Shaykh Zayneddin on his way home to Arabistan some time after 920/1552, was ranked among the prominent ulema of Hilla.⁸³ In contradistinction, Sayyid Qavameddin, who was a notable Persian scholar, 'surpassed Arabs and Persians' alike by his unique pedigree and status.⁸⁴ Amir Arjomand also showed that the historian Qadi Ahmad Ghaffari (d.975/1567–8), who was a clerical notable, had projected the deep-seated resentment that his class carried for the 'Amili clerics and questioned their imprudent requisition of the

80. Biancamaria Scarcia-Amoretti, 'Religion', *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, pp. 642–3.

81. Hasan-e Rumlu, born in 937 in Qom, was the great-grandson of Amir Sultan Rumlu, one of the famous Qizilbash army commanders during the time of Shah Isma'īl I and the early period of Shah Tahmasb. See Ḥasan Bayg Rūmlū, *Aḥsan al-tawārīkh*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Navā'i (Teheran: Intishārāt-i Bābak, 1357/1978), pp. 14–16 and 21.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

83. *Ibid.* Shaykh Zayneddin is briefly introduced in Khwandamir's chronicle as a religious scholar from the 'Arab lands' or 'Arabistan'. Most probably he was from Iraq al-Arab, since he was accompanied by Sayyid Ni'matullah Hilli on the way home. He could also be Zayneddin 'Ali ibn Shaykh Ahmad ibn Qutbeddin, the copyist of the work *Rawḍat al-jannāt fī awṣāf al-Hirāt*; a history of Herat from early times to the beginning of the reign of Abu'l-Ghazi, Sultan Husayn, compiled in 897/1491 by Mu'īn al-Zamjī al-Asfizārī. See Charles Rieu, *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1895), p. 64.

84. Khvānd Mīr, *Tārīkh-i Ḥabīb al-Siyar fī akhbār afrād al-bashar* (Teheran: Kitābkānah-yi Khayyām, 1954), part 4, vol. 3, p. 113.

title ulema, the learned.⁸⁵ In comparison, Rumlu drew al-Karaki in a favourable light and even where he praised the scholarly merits of Mir Ghiyatheddin he ranked him second after al-Karaki.⁸⁶ Monshi too showed great admiration and respect for the 'Amili ulema, with the exception probably of Mir Husayn, the grandson of al-Karaki, who seems to have been very arrogant.⁸⁷

At the time of al-Karaki's death in 940/1533, it became clear that the sayings and actions of leading 'Amilis bore great moral and socio-political import. Before the year 940/1533 came to a close, a 'Sayyid Muhammad Jabal 'Amili' (d.968/1560), the *pishnamaz* (prayer leader) of the imperial camp of Shah Tahmasb, saw the Prophet in a dream, portending that if the Shah were to interdict prohibited acts, he would achieve a victorious conquest of the Uzbek regions.⁸⁸ When Sayyid Muhammad related his dream to the courtiers and viziers, they decided to act upon it. The princes professed their repentance for such practices among themselves and among government officials and issued a command prohibiting alcohol, gambling and similar diversions.

UNDOING AL-KARAKI'S RULINGS AND REACTIVATING TRADITION: HUSAYN IBN ABD AL-SAMAD (DIED 984/1576)

Husayn ibn Abd al-Samad al-Harithi al-Juba'i, the father of Baha'eddin al-'Amili, known better in Iran as Shaykh-e Baha'i, was another major 'Amili jurist from Juba' recruited into the Safavid religious order. When Husayn ibn Abd al-Samad first arrived in Iran around 960/1552, he spent three years teaching the religious sciences, mostly in Isfahan, before being noticed by Shah Tahmasb in 963/1556.⁸⁹

Thanks to the efforts of Shaykh Ali al-Minshar, a student of al-Karaki and the *shaykh al-Islam* of Isfahan, Shah Tahmasb sent Husayn the robe of honour and royal gifts and summoned him to Qazvin where he spent around seven years.⁹⁰

The turbulent and profane life of the royalty and the restrictive conditions of serving the Shahs combined to create a general sense of vanity about Husayn's life in Iran. This however, did not deter him from engaging in and fulfilling the titular conditions of his official posts. His efforts brought important changes to the Iranian clerical leadership, to the function of the *mujtahid* and to the scope of his power. He reinstituted the reading of hadith books in Persia and worked diligently to verify Shi'i traditions in a manner reminiscent of al-Shahid al-Thani, his teacher.⁹¹ He also questioned the idea that a jurist can become the 'seal' of clerics or, for that matter, the ultimate religious authority. Husayn indirectly questioned Shah Tahmasb's attempt to sanction the claims of al-Karaki and his grandson, Mir Husayn, to supreme *ijtihad*. Husayn also opposed al-Karaki's delineation of the *qibla* (prayer niche) of Iraq al-Ajam and Khorasan. He explained in proper mathematical calculations and geometric illustrations the correct angle at which the *qibla* should be situated. Here, he openly criticized the blind imitation (*taqlid*) of al-Karaki, reminding readers that al-Karaki himself proclaimed it impermissible to imitate a dead *mujtahid*.⁹²

For a few decades after al-Karaki's death, Friday prayer was deserted in various regions of the Safavid Empire. This was due to the ulema's disagreement over its status and conditions and to the Persian aristocracy's reluctance to empower the jurist with exclusive political functions.⁹³ Husayn was one of the few 'Amili scholars to support the absolute necessity of convening Friday prayer. He suggested that it was incumbent upon all Muslim believers to observe Friday prayer, and believed that the Shah was religiously obliged to support it for the benefit of

85. Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God*, p. 133. Ghaffari is the author of the famous Safavid chronicle, *Tārīkh-i jahān-ārā*.

86. Rūmlū, *Aḥsan al-tawārīkh*, pp. 392–3.

87. Munshī, *History*, vol. 1, p. 233.

88. Shīrāzī, *Takmilat al-akhbār*, pp. 76 and 118.

89. Based on a brief description of a newly found manuscript, Husayn ibn Abd al-Ṣamad seems to have spent 23 years in Iran from 960 to 983. He spent three years in Isfahan, seven in Qazvin, five in Mashhad and eight in Herat. See Yūsuf Tabāja, 'Iktishāf risāla makhtūta li'l-Shaykh Ḥusayn al-'Āmilī al-mafqūda', *Al-Safīr*, 11 August 2001. Before the discovery of this manuscript, Devin Stewart and Dalal 'Abbas made significant though slightly different observations about the whereabouts of Husayn and the time he spent in Iraq and Iran, and about Baha'i. See Stewart, 'The First *Shaykh al-Islam* of the Safavid Capital Qazvin', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 116:3 (July–September 1996): 390–9; Dalāl 'Abbās, *Bahā' al-Dīn al-'Āmilī*, Chapters 1 and 2. See also Isfahānī, *Riyāḍ*, vol. 2, p. 120. This last account is based on the biographical report related by Muzafareddin 'Alī Shah, through his teacher Shaykh Baha'i; Isfahānī, *Khuld-i barīn*, p. 434; al-Amīn, *A'yān*, vol. 6, pp. 58–60.

90. See al-Muhājir, *al-Hijra*, p. 146. Eskandar Beg Monshi makes no mention of the post of *shaykh al-Islam* in Qazvin which may indicate that he either occupied it only for a short period of time or that Monshi's account is not comprehensive.

91. Isfahānī, *Riyāḍ*, vol. 2, pp. 108–10; Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd al-Ṣamad, *Wuṣūl al-akhbār ilā uṣūl al-akhbār*, ed. 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Kūhkamārī (Qom, 1041/1631), p. 11. Nizameddin al-Tafreshi, Baha'i's student, stated that Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd al-Ṣamad 'renewed the reading of hadith books in Persia'.

92. Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd al-Ṣamad, 'Taḥqīq qiblat 'Irāq al-'Ajam wa Khurāsān', obtained from Devin Stewart, folio 8. It may be the same as 'Tuḥfat ahl al-īmān fī qiblat 'Irāq al-'Ajam wa Khurāsān'.

93. Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd al-Ṣamad, *ʿIqd al-Ḥusaynī (al-Ṭahmāsbī)*, ed. Sayyid Javād Mudarrisī Yazdī (Yazd: n.p., n.d.), pp. 31–3; See also, Munshī, *History*, vol. 1, p. 247; and Isfahānī, *Khuld-i barīn*, p. 434.

the faithful.⁹⁴ He disengaged Friday prayer from the condition that a jurist be present who is designated the deputy of the imam in a general or specific manner. Husayn succeeded in convincing the Shah of the usefulness of convening Friday prayer to undercut Ottoman slander and legitimize the Safavid religious order. Unlike al-Karaki, Husayn kept a low profile with respect to Court intrigues and competitions, and tried to disentangle the question of Friday prayer from the *realpolitik* of the early era of Tahmasb's reign. By undermining the 'deputyship' of the jurist and emphasizing the usefulness of Friday prayer for imperial sovereignty, Husayn dispelled the elites' fears of the clerics' political ambitions. Husayn explained that convening Friday prayer was simply a religious necessity and a symbol of Safavid sovereignty against Ottoman allegations of 'un-Islamicness'.

Around 970/1562 Husayn left for Mashhad, where he spent five years.⁹⁵ Shah Tahmasb then summoned him to a challenging religious post in Herat around 975–6/1569. Many Heratis, Muzaffareddin 'Ali reflected, were ignorant about Twelver Shi'ism and the performance of prayer rituals in accordance with Imami beliefs.⁹⁶ For almost eight years, Husayn ibn Abd al-Samad was *shaykh al-Islam* of Herat, laboriously inculcating the knowledge and practice of Shi'i doctrine and edicts. Students, scholars and jurisconsults, both Iranian and Transoxianian, flocked to him from surrounding regions to collate and compare Shi'i traditions and strengthen their knowledge in religious law.⁹⁷ In return for his services, the Shah extended to him the ownership and associated *waqf* (religious endowments) of three villages in Herat.

It has been posited by Ja'far al-Muhajir and Devin Stewart that Husayn ibn Abd al-Samad fell from the Shah's favour around 970/1562 when he suddenly lost the prestigious seat of *shaykh al-Islam* of Qazvin, the capital city of the empire since 955/1548.⁹⁸ Al-Muhajir and Stewart both agree that the move to Herat was a demotion and a step almost resembling a trip into exile. Stewart, furthermore, advances an elaborate argument in support of the view that Husayn was intentionally dismissed from his post in Qazvin in favour of Mir Husayn. Indeed, Husayn had questioned and harshly criticized a number of legal opinions advanced by al-Karaki and upheld by Mir Husayn. Yet to date we have no piece of historical evidence to suggest that the circumstances surrounding the careers and proceedings

94. Husayn ibn 'Abd al-Šamad, *‘Iqd al-Ḥusaynī*, p. 3. This book is a collection of treatises dealing with Friday prayers.

95. Tabāja, 'Iktishāf risāla makhtūta'.

96. Iṣfahānī, *Riyāḍ*, vol. 2, p. 120; Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd al-Šamad, *Wuṣūl al-akhyār*, p. 12.

97. Ibid.; Iṣfahānī, *Riyāḍ*, vol. 2, p. 120; al-Amīn, *A'yan*, vol. 6, pp. 57–60.

98. Al-Muhājir, *al-Hijra*, p. 149; Devin Stewart, 'The First Shaykh al-Islam of the Safavid Capital Qazvin' *Journal of the American Oriental Society (JAOS)*, 116:3 (July–September 1996): 402–4.

of Husayn and Mir Husayn overlapped, or that the two scholars met in a passing encounter or altercation. Eskandar Beg Monshi, the Safavid historian, asserted that Mir Husayn was recognized as a *mujtahid* in his own right but neither mentioned Husayn's attitude towards him nor hinted at their power struggle.⁹⁹ It is difficult to decide why Monshi would consciously downplay Husayn's removal from Qazvin in the biography he wrote on him and his son Shaykh-e Baha'i. On several occasions Monshi disclosed the controversies and rivalries between al-Karaki and several Court figures and ulema. Again, neither Baha'i's biographical accounts nor those of his students Nizameddin al-Sawiji al-Qurashi and al-Karaki touched on Husayn's alleged grievance against Mir Husayn.

A close examination of Safavid chronicles and of correspondence between Husayn and Baha'i shows that the position Husayn received at Herat, the capital city of Khorasan, was as prestigious as, if not at times more so than, that at Qazvin. Herat figured prominently in Safavid chronicles as the seat of the late Timurid dynasty (795/1393–911/1506) and of the contentious region where Safavid–Uzbek struggles occurred in the mid and late seventeenth century. Monshi could not help but admit in his *Tarikh-e 'Alamara-ye 'Abbasi* that he had devoted an overwhelming section of his history to Khorasan at the expense of other Safavid regions.¹⁰⁰ His emphasis on Khorasan, which was 'adjacent to Transoxiana and was always subject to Uzbek incursions' along with its two main capital cities Herat and Mashhad, attests to their political, military and economic importance.¹⁰¹ Covering the historical incidents of 985/1577, Monshi reflected that 'from the time that Khorasan first became part of the Safavid Empire, Herat had always been the seat of one of the princes of royal blood, and it would not be possible to defend the province if this support were withdrawn.'¹⁰²

Like Tabriz, Herat was included among the former capitals of mighty princes such as the young Abbas Mirza (later Shah Abbas I), and in 951/1544–45 Monshi depicts it as a resort where leading officials could enjoy such pastimes as hunting and excursions in its pleasant gardens.¹⁰³ Prince Mohammad Khodabandeh, Shah Tahmasb's son and potential successor, was residing there when he assumed the post of *shaykh al-Islam* in Herat. Shah Tahmasb ordered Amir Quli Sultan Yakan A'la, the ruler of Khorasan, to send Mirza Mohammad Khodabandeh every Friday after prayer to the congregational mosque in Herat to be instructed in hadith and *fiqh* by Husayn. He insisted that the Prince comply with all Husayn's decisions to

99. Munshī, *History*, vol. 2, pp. 631–2.

100. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 109. Munshi was covering the events of 944/1537 when he made the above observation.

101. Ibid., p. 364.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid., pp. 162 and 341–2.

set an example for others and to acknowledge him as the highest and most authoritative religious source there. Again in *Khold-e Barin*, the post at Herat is described in admiring terms as an 'adorned seat of *fiqh*' while Herat itself, referred to here and elsewhere as *dar al-saltana*, is presented in flowery words such as a captivating and 'exhilarating' land.¹⁰⁴

Even more revealing is how Husayn ibn Abd al-Samad and his family felt about Herat, seen in a 100-verse poem about the city in the *rajaz* meter composed by Baha'i. Entitled *al-Zahira* (The Radiant [City]), Baha'i supposedly produced it in one day in Qazvin, as he lay ill with ophthalmia (inflammation of the eyes).¹⁰⁵ *Al-Zahira* opens with a general description of Herat, and its succeeding sections describe its waters, weather, women and fruits. He recounts some intimate memories of his time at the Herati school of Mirza in the area of Gorizgah and ends the poem by strongly lamenting his departure from Herat. His vivid longing for Herat hardly evokes a disagreeable city, let alone a place of exile where he and his father were forced to remain against their will. Furthermore, some letters composed in poetry form that Baha'i sent to his father in Herat during his own stay in Qazvin indicate how he felt about both places. Two of these letters written in 979/1571 and 981/1573 respectively express a strong desire to be in Herat with his father. In the first letter he complains about his long separation from his father in these words:

In Qazvin is my body while my soul dwells
in the land of Herat and with its people
The former departed from its kinsfolk
and the latter settled in its homeland.¹⁰⁶

Around 982–3/1574–5, Husayn visited Qazvin for the second time, requesting permission for himself and Baha'i to go on pilgrimage to Mecca. The Shah granted him permission but denied it to Baha'i, in whom he possibly envisaged the succeeding religious guide for his empire.¹⁰⁷

A DETOUR WITH SUNNISM?: SHAH ISMA'IL II AND MIR HUSAYN AL-KARAKI

With the assistance of Mirza Makhdum al-Sharifi, the new *sadr*, Shah Isma'il II (984/1576–985/1578) strove to reverse the *ghuluww* (extremist) anti-Sunni practices among the populace. More specifically, the Shah strove to halt the public

104. Iṣfahānī, *Khuld-i barīn*, p. 434.

105. Tihrānī, *al-Dharī'a*, vol. 12, 2nd edn, p. 13.

106. al-Amīn, *A'yan*, vol. 9, p. 247.

107. Ibid., vol. 6, p. 58.

defamation of 'Aisha and the ritual cursing of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman, which rose during early Safavid rule.¹⁰⁸ A few motives may account for the Shah's approach to anti-Sunni propaganda. A primary one was the fact that Shah Isma'il II was keen to comply with one of the Ottoman demands of the Amasya peace treaty concluded in 963/1555, which called for an end to the vilification of the three caliphs.¹⁰⁹ Another was the Shah's attempt to weaken the clerics as he attempted to sequester land grants (*suyurghals*) from Sayyids and Shi'i ulema.¹¹⁰ The Shah also clashed with the Ustajlu tribe and a number of Qizilbash amirs who were allied to the clerics. The public denunciation of Sunni emblems became one stage on which this power struggle between the Shah and the cleric-Qizilbash group was played out. The Shah also hoped to weaken the public appeal of the 'Amili clerics who administered and encouraged ritual cursing of the first three caliphs among Iranians.

Despite their discontent with Shah Isma'il II's policies, the majority of ulema avoided a confrontation with him.¹¹¹ In place of 'zealous' Shi'i scholars like the Astarabadis, the Shah appointed ulema with Sunni leanings such as Mawlana Mirza Jan Shirazi and Mir Makhdum Lala. To this group of loyal supporters the Shah patronized the Qalandari Sufis whose mention ignited great hatred among the ulema. Early 'Amili ulemas, including al-Karaki, had issued fatwas (legal injunctions) that proclaimed the Qalandaris religiously deviant and called for severe retribution against them.¹¹²

Mir Husayn defied the Shah ardently and became in turn the target of Mirza Makhdum's counter schemes. The Shah believed that Mir Husayn and the Astarabadis with whom the Karakis enjoyed marital and friendship ties had turned the Qizilbash against him.¹¹³ The Shah viewed another 'Amili scholar with distrust, namely 'Mir Seyyed Ali', or Tajeddin Abd al-Ali (d.993/1585), the son of al-Karaki who worked as a *katib* (secretary) at the Court. In a Persian treatise written as a commentary on the biography of Baha'i by one of his students it is indicated that Shah Isma'il II made an attempt against Abd al-Ali's life after which the latter fled from Qazvin to Hamadan.

Mir Husayn, however, was not easily thwarted and, unlike his maternal uncle,

108. Rumlu noted that the practice of cursing the three caliphs was rigorously implemented early in 905–6 by the Safavids. See Rūmlū, *Aḥsan al-tawārīkh*, p. 86.

109. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 252.

110. Michel Mazzaoui, 'The Religious Policy of Safavid Shah Isma'il II', in Michel M. Mazzaoui and Vera B. Moreen, eds, *Intellectual Studies on Islam: Essays Written in Honor of Martin B. Dickson* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), p. 53.

111. Munshī, *History*, vol. 1, pp. 318–19.

112. See al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karaki's 'Fatāwā khātam al-mujtahidīn', in *Rasā'il*, p. 320.

113. Munshī, *History*, vol. 1, p. 319.

decided to remain in Qazvin. Charged with exceptional powers under Shah Tahmasb, he became the courtiers' confidant, consulted about 'all the knotty problems no one could solve, not even the royal princes'. His requests were invariably accorded.¹¹⁴ No one dared criticize him openly for his notorious assumption of pompous titles or for his claim to supreme *ijtihad*.¹¹⁵

On one occasion Shah Isma'il II decided to do away with the inscribed names of the twelve Imams on the coinage. Instead, he suggested the inscription of a royal *ghurma* (fine). Mir Husayn decided to prevent such a change by advising the Shah to inscribe a verse of poetry by the famous Persian poet Mawla Hayrati, which includes the cursing of the three caliphs. Infuriated but cautious, the Shah dismissed the subject altogether lest it incurred the support of his courtiers.

Mir Husayn's involvement in the political affairs of the empire went beyond defending the Shi'i creed to searching for possible substitutes for the Shah. Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, the Shah's nephew and 'a most talented and cultured man, an artist, outstanding musician and poet', seemed to have been strongly favoured by Mir Husayn and was most probably secretly supported as an alternative candidate to the throne.¹¹⁶ The Shah's position became increasingly precarious, knowing as he did that the ulema, led by Mir Husayn and allied to the Qizilbash amirs, were advocating Sultan Ibrahim Mirza as a substitute. At his command the prince was murdered in Qazvin shortly afterwards.¹¹⁷ Shah Isma'il II's timely death alone saved Prince Abbas Mirza, the future Shah Abbas I, from assassination.¹¹⁸

RENEWED INTEREST IN IRANIAN-^CAMILI LEGALISM: THE PERIOD OF SHAH ABBAS THE GREAT

The reign of Shah Abbas the Great (995/1587–1038/1629) marked the zenith of 'Amili eminence in Iran and the last phase of their close association with the Safavid Court. To consolidate his religious order, Shah Abbas became the patron of distinguished clerics of 'Amili descent, including Shaykh-e Baha'i

114. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 631–2.

115. Munshī, *History*, vol. 1, p. 204.

116. Ibid., p. 318.

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 324. My observations about the overall Safavid policies toward Sunnism confirm those advanced by Rosemary Stanfield Johnson who successfully showed that 'it is less likely that one would describe the sectarian tension of this period, as a whole, 'Shi'i-Sunni' or as the product of the Safavid revolution'. In fact, Sunnis remained a force to reckon with at the highest political levels as members of the bureaucracy, and it was only when they lost their 'political restraint' that the state tried to take a measure against them. See her 'Sunni Survival in Safavid Iran: Anti-Sunni Activities during the reign of Tahmasb I', *Iranian Studies*, 27:1–4 (1994): 132–3.

(d.1030/1621), Mir Mohammad Baqer Astarabadi, known as Mir Damad (d.1041/1631–32), Lutfullah al-Maysi (d.1032/1622–23) and Ahmad ibn Zayn al-^cAbidin al-^cAmili (d.1054/ 1644).¹¹⁹

No 'Amili scholar in Iran had achieved the posthumous acclaim of Shaykh-e Baha'i. In 984/1576, after the death of Shaykh Ali al-Minshar, his father-in-law, Baha'i assumed the post of *shaykh al-Islam* and supervised the application of religious law as *vakil-e halaliyyat* in Isfahan.¹²⁰ Some sources suggest, however, that his first official post was actually in Herat as a religious guide after his father's departure for pilgrimage around 983/1575.¹²¹ We know little about Baha'i's whereabouts in the period following his father's departure other than that he dedicated a Persian treatise, *Awzan-e shar'i*, to Shah Mohammad Khodabandeh during his early reign in 985/1577–8.¹²² The Shah was well acquainted with Baha'i for he used to sit through his father's Friday sermons and was instructed by him in Shi'i doctrine during his youth in Herat.

In the early reign of Shah Abbas, Baha'i is mentioned twice in *Khulasat al-tawarikh*, but merely as a distinguished scholar.¹²³ Mir Husayn was still the glamorous *mujtahid* of that period, a fact overshadowed by the emphasis on his

119. The justification for counting Mir Damad among the 'Amilis, lies in the fact that historical chronicles constantly present him as al-Karaki's maternal grandson. Even his name 'Damad' applies to his father who married al-Karaki's two daughters. No scholarly attributes of any sort are mentioned in connection with his father, Sayyid Muhammad Husayni Astarabadi. In addition, Mir Damad's legalistic training ties him closely to other 'Amilis. See al-Bahrānī, *Lu'lu'at*, pp. 132–3; Isfahānī, *Khuld-i barīn*, p. 417; al-Amīn, *A'yān*, vol. 9, p. 243.

120. Al-Ḥurr, *Amal*, vol. 1, pp. 155–60; Isfahānī, *Riyāḍ*, vol. 5, pp. 88–97; al-Amīn, *A'yān*, vol. 9, pp. 234–49; al-Bahrānī, *Lu'lu'at*, pp. 16–23; Munshī, *History*, vol. 1, pp. 247–9.

121. Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt*, vol. 7, p. 58. Husayn ibn Haydar al-Karaki, stated that together with his teacher Baha'i, they had travelled to Herat 'where he and his father were *shaykh al-Islam*'; al-Amīn, *A'yān*, vol. 9, pp. 234–49; See Devin Stewart, 'A Biographical Notice on Baha' al-Din al-'Amili (d. 1030/1621)', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 111:3 (1991): 563–71. Stewart felt that the Arabic structure of the statement by Baha'i's student was peculiar and suggested a different reading of the statement. This led him to deduce that Baha'i did not serve as *shaykh al-Islam* there. See also Dalāl 'Abbās, *Bahā' al-Dīn*, pp. 115–16.

122. The treatise is also known in Arabic as '*Mizān al-maqādīr*' and '*al-Ṭuhfa*'. It is divided into 12 chapters dealing with units of weight and the quantity of water. See Tihirānī, *al-Dharī'a*, vol. 23, 2nd edn, p. 321.

123. Aḥmad Ibrāhīm Ḥusaynī [Qāḍī Aḥmad Qummī], *Die Chronik Hulāṣat at-tawārīh des Qazī Aḥmad Qumī: Der Abschnitt über Schah 'Abbās I*, edited and translated by Hans Müller (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1964), pp. 6, 13, 17, 93 in the Persian text and pp. 29, 33, 36, 93 in the German translation.

connection to the reign of Shah Isma'īl II. Referred to as the 'jurisconsult of the age', Mir Husayn was present at Court ceremonies and resolved the Safavid princes' social and legal problems.¹²⁴ It was not until 1008/1600, two years after the Safavid Court was moved from Qazvin to Isfahan, that Shah Abbas recognized Baha'i and appointed him *shaykh al-Islam*.¹²⁵

Under Shah Abbas, the ethnic and social composition of the military and administrative elites underwent significant change with the introduction of Circassian and Georgian *gholaman* (slave soldiers). Furthermore, Shah Abbas's military expansion and depopulation policies brought to the fore thorny legal questions about Muslim-Christian relations. Both Mir Husayn and Baha'i wrote *dhabihyya* (slaughter animals) treatises during the reign of Shah Abbas. At one Court assembly, the Ottoman envoy criticized the Shah for prohibiting the consumption of animals slaughtered by Christians and Jews.¹²⁶ After advancing all the legal justifications for the prohibition, the Shah ordered Baha'i's *Risala fi hukm dhaba'ih ahl al-kitab* to be sent to the Ottoman sultan to circumvent Sunni slander of his empire's Shi'i practices and to confirm the Islamic foundations of Ja'fari law.

As Baha'i's professional and social fortunes soared, he became more restricted by the protocol of courtly life. Nowhere is this restriction more evident than in the Shah's attempt to regulate and control relations among his clerics on the one hand and among the Sufis and dissent groups on the other. For instance, Shah Abbas learnt that Baha'i frequented the quarters of the poor, mingling and spending time with them. Disturbed by such news, he approached Baha'i saying, 'I have heard that one of the great scholars mingled with the poor and the vile in their cottages and that is improper.' Baha'i answered: 'This is not true, for many are the times I spent in these places and it never happened that I encountered any such scholar there!'¹²⁷

On another occasion the Shah seemed to have undermined Baha'i's position and supported a rival scholar. Baha'i protested:

I heard from the wind that the Shah had compared me to others,
From whose imaginary existence, a hundred disgrace befalls me,
You know not my worth, so sell me not for little,
The Baha'i is who I am, and great is my worth.¹²⁸

Many were the times when Baha'i doubted the religious value of the service he rendered to the Safavids and, ultimately, the integrity of the Shah himself. For, despite the Shah's public acts of piety, he was still entangled in the diversions of the royal family, namely wine drinking, drugs and various other forms of entertainment like dancing and singing. So fond was the Shah of alcohol that he ordered his personal doctor to compose a work on its benefits and on the attributes of wine drinkers.¹²⁹ Baha'i also seemed to be repulsed by Shah Abbas's acts of cruelty, especially when he ordered the assassination of Safi Mirza, his own son and potential successor. Safi Mirza's body remained in mud for four hours until Baha'i ordered it to be picked up, washed and given a proper burial. Historical sources tell us that Baha'i blamed Shah Abbas for his heinous act in words that left the ruler with a deep sense of remorse for the rest of his life.¹³⁰

A grim view of public office and scholastic leadership embroiled in social competition and royal whims was evident in Baha'i's writings. He proclaimed: 'If my father had not come to Iran, I would not have been afflicted with the company of the Shah.'¹³¹ In one of his *sawanih* (thoughts), which he composed during his travel to the Hijaz he reflected:

The companion of the king is envied among the select and the commoners alike, but in reality he is doomed by what he receives of numerous veiled solitudes which people can neither detect nor encompass in their vision. For that reason, wise men had said: 'The possessor of power is like the rider of a lion, for when it seems that the lion is the rider's horse in reality the rider is the lion's horse!'¹³²

Numerous were the instances when he expressed a nostalgic urge to live simply in a manner reminiscent of his father's teacher, al-Shahid al-Thani, who built his own house and used to tend his own vineyard at night and teach during the day.

Another prominent cleric of the period of Shah Abbas was the religious scholar and philosopher Mir Damad. He tackled *furu'* matters on worship, *rida'* (foster

129. Ibid., pp. 72-3; Naṣr Allāh Falsafī, *Zindagānī-yi Shāh 'Abbās-i Avval* (Teheran: Dānishgāh-i Tih-rān, 1334/1955-1352/1973), vol. 2, pp. 52-3.

130. Falsafī, *Zindagānī-yi Shah 'Abbās*, vol. 2, p. 291; 'Abbās, *Bahā' al-Dīn*, p. 186.

131. Al-Amīn, *A'yān*, vol. 9, p. 240; Bahā' al-Dīn al-Āmilī, *al-Kashkūl*, vol. 1 (Qom: Farāhānī Institute, n.d.), p. 213.

132. Bahā' al-Dīn, *al-Kashkūl*, p. 212. He includes several excerpts of his work '*Sawānīh safar al-Hijāz*', better known as '*Nān va Ḥalvā*' most of which he composed during his trip to Hijaz for pilgrimage. Thus, one finds that a number of the *sawānīh* of the first volume of *al-Kashkūl* carry an introspective dimension into his personal worries and conflicting urges at the time of travel.

124. Qummī, *Die Chronik*, pp. 93-4.

125. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', p. 270.

126. *Al-Dharī'a*, vol. 10 (Beirut, 1983), pp. 3-4. Another treatise is entitled '*Risāla fi nijāsat dhabā'ih al-kuffār wa ṣanā'ihim*'. Baha'i prohibits the wearing of clothes, gold, silver and other items that infidels make.

127. 'Abbās, *Bahā' al-Dīn*, p. 187.

128. Ibid., pp. 195-6.

relationships) and discussed the judicial procedure in divorce, all of which attended to the daily concerns of Iranians. At the same time, he invested much intellectual effort in producing works of philosophy/theosophy, which were accessible to a highly selective and learned audience. The eclectic and multifaceted intellectual makeups of Baha'i and Mir Damad signalled the emergence of a new group of ulema who departed from conventional legalistic training.¹³³

The scholarly talents of yet another Amili, namely Ahmad ibn Zayn al-^cAbidin, were soon put to political use by Shah Abbas I. His polemical treatises *Lavame^c-e rabbani dar radd-e shobahat-e Nasrani*, completed in 1030/1620, and *Masqal-e Safa va tajalli va tasfiyeh-ye a'ineh-ye Haqq-nama*, written in 1032, were devoted to the refutation of Christianity. Around the same time P. Jérôme-Xavier of the Company of Jesus Christ wrote *A'ineh-ye Haqq-nama*, which he dedicated to the Mugal emperor Jahanghir in Lahore in about 1030/1620. *A'ineh* spells out the dogmas of Christianity and repudiates the false conceptions of Islam.¹³⁴ Before that Jérôme-Xavier had also written works in Persian under Emperor Akbar expounding the Christian faith such as *Dastan-e Masih* and *Dastan-e Pedro* on Jesus and Saint Peter, respectively. In *Lavame^c-e rabbani* and *Masqal-e safa* Ahmad debunked the central thesis of *A'ineh*, which had found its way into Iran.¹³⁵

Ahmad's polemical works are significant because they were written in the aftermath of Shah Abbas's victorious military expedition against the Portuguese at Hurmuz in 1030/1620–21. Then, with the military and naval assistance of the English East India Company, Shah Abbas pushed the Portuguese out of the island in 1032/1622 and ended their influence in the Persian Gulf.¹³⁶ He also destroyed the fort they had built on the neighbouring island of Qeshm.

133. See Rula Jurdi Abisaab, 'The 'Ulama of Jabal 'Amil': 109–10.

134. Le P. Raphael Du Mans, *Estat de La Perse en 1660* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1890), ed. Ch. Schefer, pp. xcii–xciii. P. Jérôme-Xavier studied Persian for eight years and was assisted in laying down his early works on Christianity by 'Abd al-Šamad Qāsim, a learned man from Lahore.

135. *Al-Dharī'a*, vol. 21, 1st edn. (Najaf and Teheran, 1392H/1972), pp. 130–1. It is puzzling though that the treatise is dedicated to Shah Safi who did not assume power before 1038/1629 unless it was later dedicated to him but originally to Shah 'Abbas. Almost ten years after Ahmad ibn Zayn al-^cAbidin wrote his polemical treatise against Christianity, P. Guadagnoli published in 1041/1631 in Rome a treatise against him entitled, 'Apologia pro christiana religione qua a R. P. Philippo Guadagnolo Malleanensi, clericorum regula minorum S. Theologiae et arabicae linguae professore, respondetur ad objectiones Ahmad filii zin Alabidin, Persae Asphahanensis, contentas in libro inscripto politar speculi. Romae, 1631'. See Raphael Du Mans, *Estat de La Perse*, xciii, footnote.

136. Laurence, 'European Contacts': 393. For more information on the involvement of the East India Company in the assault against the Portuguese, see pp. 444–6.

The name of Lutfullah al-Maysi al-^cAmili became closely associated with Shah Abbas's Court. Lutfullah's family had migrated from Mays al-Jabal in Jabal 'Amil to Iran when Lutfullah was in his early youth.¹³⁷ In deference to his contributions, the Shah built him a school and a mosque facing the palace of Naqsh-e Jahan (Ali Qapu), which came to bear his name. During one of his trips with the Shah, the latter told him: 'I want to build you a congregational mosque facing my abode, which can fit from a thousand to two thousand people, that Turkomans, slaves, and every other willing person including myself, may come to you.'¹³⁸

In all his interactions with him, Lutfullah expressed great devotion and admiration for Shah Abbas. Lutfullah seems to have been the only major cleric of this period to endorse the obligatory convening of Friday prayer, thus lending forceful support to Abbas's imperial sovereignty. The close relationship between the two men was sealed with a marriage between Lutfullah's daughter and the Shah. Lutfullah's treatise *al-Itikāfiyya* (seclusion) provides further insight into his relationship with the Shah.¹³⁹ He boasts about his efforts to implement the proper rulings of worship in both Qazvin and Isfahan and prays for the perseverance of the Alid dynasty of 'pure descent' whose power is derived from the sovereignty of *saḥib al-zaman* (the Mahdi). He wishes the empire would overcome its Uzbek and Ottoman enemies. To enhance his reputation among his critics and rival ulema, Lutfullah explained that the Shah had built him a congregational mosque, adding that: 'many of the inhabitants of these remote countries and prosperous towns, upon arriving to Isfahan would ask about us in the following manner: "Where is the shaykh for whom the Shah had built a new congregational mosque, that we may be graced by him and become his slaves?"'¹⁴⁰

Al-Itikāfiyya also attests to the strong resistance Lutfullah faced from a group of Iranian artisans and *bazaaris* (merchants) who were associated with the city's older mosque. They openly challenged his rulings on seclusion and claimed that the mosque the Shah had built for him was unsuitable for congregational prayer.¹⁴¹

137. Munshī, *History*, vol. 1, p. 249; Isfahānī, *Riyāḍ*, vol. 4, p. 418; al-Amīn, *A'yān*, vol. 9, p. 38. Hasan al-Amin takes Sulayman al-Bustani to task for claiming that Lutfullah was the ambassador of the Ma'nid Amir Fakhreddin II of Mount Lebanon to Shah Abbas with the aim of coordinating their political efforts against the Ottomans. See Ḥ al-Amīn, *Mustadrakāt A'yān al-Shi'a*, vol. 1 (Beirut, 1408/1987), p. 136.

138. Luṭf Allāh al-Maysī, 'al-Itikāfiyya', in *Fihrist-i Nusakh-i Khaṭṭi-yi Kitābkhānah-yi Āstānah-yi Muqaddasa-yi Qum*, by M. T. Danishpazhuh, collection 2244, no. 34, (Qom, 1355sh), folio 9b.

139. Luṭf Allāh al-Maysī, 'al-Itikāfiyya', folio 1b. For a thorough treatment of this question see Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, pp. 81–7.

140. 'Al-Itikāfiyya', folio 9b.

141. Ibid., folio 9b–10a.

Lutfullah defended his position against the artisans who accused him of violating the sacred law and making harmful innovations in religious practice.¹⁴²

Until his death Lutfullah remained the prayer leader at the mosque and resided within its precincts, instructing students in religious and theological matters.¹⁴³ His expenses were paid by a stipend from the revenues of the royal household and the Shah allotted pensions and stipends to his family.¹⁴⁴ Lutfullah's son Ja'far followed in his father's footsteps and remained in the service of Shah Abbas.

AFTERTHOUGHTS

In the late twentieth century the Shi'ism of the Safavid Empire and the 'Amili Arab role in implementing it became the focus of critique and revision by Iranian and Lebanese scholars alike. Ali Shariati painted a picture of a corrupt 'Safavi' Shi'ism that violated the purity and revolutionary spirit of 'Alavi' Shi'ism.¹⁴⁵ Other scholars, speaking through their nationalistic or Islamist leanings, have debated whether the 'Amili presence in Safavid Iran was a blessing or a curse, overlooking at times the fluid and polyphonic nature of Arab-Persian cultural exchange.¹⁴⁶ Put

142. Ibid, folios 1b, 8b. I assess this treatise in *Converting Persia*.

143. Munshī, *History*, vol. 2, pp. 1229–30.

144. Munshī, *History*, vol. 1, p. 249; vol. 2, pp. 1229–30.

145. H. E. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: The Liberation Movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and New York, 1990), pp. 68–74.

146. For representatives of these trends of scholarship, see 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Ṣāliḥī Shahīdī, 'Madrasa-yi falsafī-yi Qazvīn dar 'aṣr-i Ṣafavī', *Hawza*, 58 (1371/1992): 169–92; 'Alī Naqī Munzavī ed., *Ṭabaqāt a'lām al-shī'a: Al-Kawākib al-muntashira*, (Teheran: Dānishgāh-i Tihārān, 1372), pp. 354–7, 656–7; Dhabīh Allāh Ṣafā, *Tārīkh-i adabiyāt-i Īrān*, vol. 2 (Teheran: Kitābforūshī-yi Ibn-i Sīnā, 1373/1994), p. 128. Safa argues that Persian cultural outlook was Arabized under the influence of 'Amili and Iraqi scholars who forced Arabic as a medium of learning; Hafez F. Farmayan, *The Beginnings of Modernization in Iran: The Policies and Reforms of Shah 'Abbas I (1587–1629)*, Research Monograph No. 1, Middle East Center, University of Utah (Salt Lake City, 1969), pp. 14–16; Leonard Lewisohn, 'Sufism and the School of Isfahan', in Leonard Lewisohn and David Morgan, eds, *The Heritage of Sufism*, vol. 3 (Oxford: OneWorld, 1999), pp. 65–7. Lewisohn writes that Safavid Sufism 'was infused with extremism (ghuluww) and fuelled by fanatical Qizilbash dervichisme, repackaged, decked out in a parti-coloured cloak of Shi'ite piety, its most celebrated exponents' diction and lexicon tainted by their Arab colleagues in the *madrasa*, all of whom are steeped in the semi-alien language of Lebanon from whence so many Safavid *ulema* hailed.' On the Lebanese side, several scholars have hailed the 'Amili efforts in shaping Iran's legal and political thought within the framework of Twelver Shi'ism. See as examples, Muruwwa, *al-Tashayyu' bayna Jabal 'Āmil; Ja'far al-Muhajir, al-Hijra al-*

simply, the 'Amilis modified ideal Imami conceptions and tried to fit them to the new society they joined, namely that of Iran. In doing so, they tapped and revisited the knowledge and social experiences they carried from their Syrian towns and cities in Jabal 'Amil.

'Āmiliyya; Muḥammad 'Alī Makkī, *Lubnān min al-faṭḥ al-'arabī*; 'Alī Darwīsh, *Jabal 'Āmil*.

An Iranian Enclave in Lebanon: Baha'i Students in Beirut, 1906–40

Richard Hollinger

The story of the Baha'i students in Beirut forms a short but significant chapter in the history of Iranian expatriates in the Near East and in the history of the Baha'i religion in the region. The presence of a group of Baha'i students in Beirut introduced Persian culture to the campus of the Syrian Protestant College (American University of Beirut after 1920), may have contributed to changes in the stance of the university towards religious minorities and facilitated the establishment of a Baha'i community in the city. Moreover, the education of these Iranian expatriates in Beirut led to changes in the Baha'i community because many of these students became leaders of that community, bringing viewpoints shaped by their Western education to bear on the administration of its affairs. Finally, those Iranian Baha'i students who returned to Iran played a part in the modernization of Iran.

Many Iranian Baha'i students who attended educational institutions in Beirut had roots outside their homeland that they could trace for at least a generation. The exile of Mirza Hosein Ali (Baha'ullah), the Babi leader and founder of the Baha'i religion, to Baghdad in 1853, and later to Istanbul, Edirne and Akka, had resulted in the establishment of small groups of Babis (later Baha'is) in Baghdad, Istanbul, Cairo and other urban centres of the Near East by the late nineteenth century. These groups were formed by Baha'is who had fled persecution in Iran and relocated near their exiled leader and by a few Arab converts to the religion.

In the absence of a continuous and immediate threat of persecution, as had existed in Iran, these Baha'i groups in the Near East could operate in comparative safety, albeit with discretion and, along with Baha'i exile communities in Ashkabat (Eshq-Abad),¹ Bombay and other Asian cities, constituted a significant network of

support for Baha'is in Iran. Such Near Eastern Baha'i communities acted as a conduit for communication between Baha'i leaders confined to Akka and the Baha'i communities in Iran, supported the production and dissemination of Baha'i manuscripts and assisted Baha'i travellers *en route* to or returning from Akka.²

A Baha'i presence was first established in Lebanon when Muhammad Mustafa Baghdadi, a follower of Baha'ullah from Baghdad, settled there with his family in about 1880, establishing a trading business in Beirut with a branch in Iskandarun.³ Other Baha'is resided in the region for periods of time, including Seyyed Hasan Afnan, a relative of Seyyed Ali Mohammad (the Bab), who engaged in long distance trade there during the 1880s and early 1890s.⁴ For Baha'i pilgrims to Palestine, Beirut became a standard stop and was the site from which they would make arrangements to enter Akka and meet Baha'ullah.⁵ The first converts from the Beirut area were Anton Haddad and Ibrahim Kheiralla, but they embraced the religion outside their native land, in Cairo in the late 1880s. Both were Christians who were educated at the Syrian Protestant College (SPC). Although their conversion led to the introduction of the religion in their own family and social networks in Beirut and villages in Mount Lebanon, the impact of this was minimized by the emigration of the Kheiralla family to the United States in the 1890s, by Kheiralla's rejection of Abdul-Baha's leadership and his subsequent expulsion from the community, and by Anton Haddad's reversion to Protestantism on his return to Lebanon some years later.⁶

It was only after Beirut, and particularly the American University of Beirut (AUB), became a favoured place for Iranian Baha'is to receive secondary and tertiary education, a status it held from about 1906 to 1940, that a Baha'i com-

Continuity in Central Asia (London: Kegan Paul International, 1991), pp. 278–305.

2. On the general migration patterns of Iranian Baha'i and the factors affecting them, see Moojan Momen, 'The Baha'i Community of Iran: Patterns of Exile and Problems of Communication', in Asghar Fathi, ed., *Iranian Refugees and Exiles Since Khomeini* (Costa Mesa, Cal.: Mazda Publishers, 1991), pp. 21–36.
3. Moojan Momen ed. 'Esslemont's Survey of the Baha'i Community in 1919–1920: Part VII: Iraq by Mirza Muhammad Husayn Wakil', *Baha'i Studies Bulletin*, 3:3 (September 1985): 5–6.
4. 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Memorials of the Faithful* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), pp. 21–2.
5. Moojan Momen, 'The Baha'i Community of Iran', p. 31.
6. For further detail see the entry for 'Anton Haddad' in *Who's Who: The American University of Beirut Alumni Association, 1870–1923* (Beirut: AUB Alumni Association, 1924) and Richard Hollinger, 'Ibrahim George Kheiralla and the Bahá'í Faith in America', in Juan Cole and Moojan Momen, eds, *Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History: From Iran East and West History*, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1983), pp. 95–133.

1. On Ashkabat see M. Momen, 'The Baha'i Community of Ashkabat: its Social Basis and Importance in Baha'i History', in Shirin Akiner, ed., *Cultural Change and*

munity became firmly established in Beirut. About 300 Iranian Baha'i students studied in Beirut at the heyday of the city's popularity as a venue for the education of Baha'i youth, most of them at AUB. The reasons for choosing the American University were varied and included the proximity of Beirut to the Baha'i leaders in Haifa and Akka, a partiality towards Western education fostered by the adoption of American curricula in Iranian Baha'i schools, the education of some Iranian Baha'is in Presbyterian primary and secondary schools that functioned as feeders for tertiary institutions of the same denomination and, finally, the increasing drift of the Iranian Baha'i community away from its Shi'i roots, a trend that obviated the purpose of educating Baha'is in *madrasas*.

BAHA'IS AND EDUCATION IN IRAN

The Babi-Baha'i Movement had begun among Shayhki religious students and ulema, and was led throughout the nineteenth century largely by converted ulema. These men administered the affairs of the Baha'i community in Iran and served as teachers (*moballeghin*) who presented and explained the teachings of the new religion both to adherents and to potential converts, although they did not carry out the same functions as Shi'i ulema.⁷ As the century progressed, however, the Baha'i movement increasingly evolved into an independent religious community with its own laws and a unique corporate identity, a process symbiotically linked to the persecution of Iranian Baha'is by Muslims and the opposition to Baha'i missionary efforts by Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian leaders from whose communities the new religion was drawing converts. Although in the late nineteenth century some Baha'is maintained dual religious identities and participated in the activities of both the Baha'i community and those of their original religions, the boundaries between the Baha'i community and other religious communities were gradually solidifying as the implications of Baha'ullah's prophetic claims became more apparent to all concerned.⁸

7. Among the more important of the converted Baha'i ex-ulema were Aqa Mohammad Qa'eni, Nabil Akbar, Molla Sadeq Moqaddas Khorasani, Ismu'llahu'l-Asdaq; Mirza 'Ali Mohammad, Ebn Sadiq; and Mirza Abolfazl Golpayegani. See Hasan M. Balyuzi, *Eminent Bahá'ís in the time of Bahá'ulláh* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1985), pp. 7–23, 112–15, 171–6; and Rüh Allāh Mihrābkhānī, *Zindagānī-yi Mīrzā Abu'l-Faḍl Gulpāyganī* (Hofheim-Langenheim: Bahá'í Verlag, 1988). On the organizational structure of the Iranian Baha'i community in the late nineteenth century, see Rüh Allāh Mihrābkhānī, 'Mahfil-i shūr-i 'ahd-i jamāl-i aqdas-i abhā', *Payām-i Bahā'ī*, no. 28 (February 1982), pp. 9–11; *ibid.*, no. 29 (March 1982), pp. 8–9.

8. A key event in this process was the compilation and distribution in the 1870s of the *Kitāb al-Aqdas*, which contained communal laws relating to marriage, inheritance and religious rituals that differed from those of Islam and other religions. On Baha'i

Consequently, by the turn of the century it was not viable for members of the Baha'i community to receive their education from *madrasas*, nor did *maktabs* provide the primary school training that many Baha'i wanted for their children. This is reflected in a trend in the occupational backgrounds of leading Baha'is that Moojan Momen has uncovered: after the 1890s, a decreasing percentage was ulema and an increasing percentage was in modern professions that presumably required some degree of Western education.⁹ Being part of a community that emphasized the value of education and embraced elements of modernism, and having no religious impediments to associating with persons of other religions, Baha'is were more inclined than most other Iranians to send their children to the primary and secondary schools opened by Protestant missionaries or to those of the Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Zoroastrian Amelioration Society, which also had Western curricula.¹⁰ In addition, Iranian Baha'is, in order to accommodate the

proselytizing among Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians in Iran, see Susan Stiles Maneck, 'The Conversion of Religious Minorities to the Baha'i Faith in Iran: Some Preliminary Observations', *Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, 3:3 (1991), pp. 39–54; Susan Stiles, 'Early Zoroastrian Conversions and the Bahá'í Faith in Yazd', in Juan R. Cole and Moojan Momen, eds, *Studies in Bábí and Bahá'í History: From Iran East and West*, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1984), pp. 67–93; Moojan Momen, 'Early Relations Between Christian Missionaries and the Babi and Baha'i Communities', in Moojan Momen, ed., *Studies in Babi and Baha'i History*, vol. 1 (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1982), pp. 49–82; and Mihrābkhānī, *Mīrzā Abu'l-Faḍl*, pp. 132–45 and 152–8.

9. Moojan Momen, 'Iran', in *A Short Encyclopedia of the Bahá'í Faith* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, forthcoming), pp. 204–9. According to Momen's statistics, in the early Babi Movement (1844–53) 55 per cent of the leading figures were ulema; under the leadership of Baha'ullah (1853–92) this declined to 25.2 per cent; and during the leadership of 'Abdul-Baha (1893–1921) 17.9 per cent were ulema, while 12.4 per cent held modern professions. See Table Three: Leading Babis and Baha'is of Iran by Occupation. At the time of this writing, the article can be viewed at the following web site: www.northill.demon.co.uk/relstud/iran.htm.

10. On these schools see Jān Ildir [John Elder], *Tārīkh-i mīsiyūn-i āmrīkā'ī dar Īrān* (Teheran: Nūr-i jahān, 1333/1954); Humā Nāṭiq, 'Tārīkhchah-yi aliāns-i isrā'īlī dar Īrān', in Homa Sarshar and Houman Sarshar, eds, *Yahūdīān-i īrānī dar tārīkh-i mu'āshir*, vol. 2 (Beverly Hills: Center for Iranian Jewish Oral History, 1997); Avraham Cohen, 'Iranian Jewry and the Educational Endeavors of the Alliance Israélite Universelle', *Jewish Social Studies*, 48 (1986): 15–44; Mary Boyce, 'Maneckji Limji Hataria in Iran', *K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume* (Bombay: K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1969), pp. 19–30. Anecdotal evidence of Baha'is attending missionary schools can be found in 'Valiullah Varqa', *Bahá'í World*, vol. 13 (Haifa, Israel: Bahá'í World Centre, 1970), p. 831; 'Mahbubih Na'imi' and 'Ishraqiyyih Dhabih', *Bahá'í World* vol. 16 (Haifa, Israel: Bahá'í World Centre, 1978), pp. 517, 540; Momen, 'Early Relations'; and Mihrābkhānī, *Mīrzā Abu'l-Faḍl*.

educational needs of their own community, established their own primary and secondary schools, which after 1910 followed an American-style curriculum. The first of these was founded in 1898, and 36 schools were eventually established in various towns and villages before the government shut them down in the 1930s.¹¹

There were, therefore, a variety of options for primary and secondary schooling available to Baha'is in Iran. However, prior to the opening of the University of Teheran in 1935, the opportunities for pursuing the equivalent of a Western college education were quite limited in the country, and prior to the opening of Stuart Memorial College in Isfahan in 1915 and Alborz College in Teheran in 1925, such opportunities were virtually non-existent.¹² The Iranian elite, therefore, began to send their children abroad for education. France was the preferred destination for most, although a number of Armenians and Zoroastrians were educated in Bombay, and Presbyterian missionaries sent a number of Iranians to Istanbul and to the United States to be trained as teachers for their schools and physicians for their missions.¹³ A connection with the Presbyterian mission in Iran, whose schools were attended by some Baha'i children, may well have been one factor attracting Baha'i students to SPC/AUB, in addition to the college's choice of English as the language of instruction, since this was the preferred foreign language and the language of instruction in some classes both in the Presbyterian and in the Baha'i schools in Iran.¹⁴ However, Baha'is chose AUB over similar institutions such as Istanbul's Robert College primarily because of its location. Beirut was near Akka, the place of exile for the Baha'i leader Abdul-Baha Abbas, who, after the Young Turks freed Ottoman political prisoners in 1908, was able to receive visitors openly.

11. 'The Tarbiyat School, Persia', *Baha'i News*, 1:7 (13 July 1910): 3-7; Michael Fischer, 'Zoroastrian Iran: Between Myth and Praxis' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1973), p. 358; Ruhyyih Rabbanni, *The Priceless Pearl* (London: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1969), p. 308; Jackson Armstrong-Ingram, 'American Baha'i Women and the Education of Girls in Teheran, 1909-1934', in Peter Smith, ed., *Studies in Babi and Baha'i History: In Iran*, vol. 3 (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1986), pp. 181-210.
12. S. M. Jordan, 'Education in the Persian Capital', report dated 17 August 1903, in Iran Correspondence (microfilm), Presbyterian Historical Society; S. M. Jordan, 'An Unprecedented Opportunity Wanted: A College for Persia', Collection MQ74.5 G83.Sh3, Presbyterian Historical Society. Īsā Šadīq, *Tārīkh-i farhang-i Īrān* (Teheran: Teheran University Press, 1938), p. 354; Reza Arasteh, *Educational and Social Awakening in Iran* (London: E. J. Brill, 1962), p. 115.
13. Sarah Evan McDowell, 'A Historical Sketch of the Teheran Station, 1871-1922', MS 143h, Presbyterian Historical Society, p. 4; Benjamin Labaree to Robert Speer, 28 August 1902, Persia Correspondence (microfilm), Presbyterian Historical Society.
14. Ildir, *Tārīkh-i Misiyūn-i Āmrīkā'i*, p. 36. *Baha'i News*, 1:7 (13 July 1910): 5.

Abdul-Baha himself generally discouraged Iranian Baha'is from going to the West for secondary or undergraduate college education, arguing that Iranian students in Europe were treated as inferiors and succumbed to Western vices that prevented them from rendering any benefit to their homeland.¹⁵ He did encourage some Baha'i students to attend graduate programmes in Europe and the United States, apparently feeling that older students were less vulnerable to the hazards of Western culture.¹⁶ While critical of the sectarianism of many religious schools and supportive of religious pluralism in tertiary educational institutions, he expressed concern about schools that eroded the faith and morals of students in the course of educating them.¹⁷ However, as we shall see, he held the SPC in high esteem and sent members of his own family there to be educated.

THE INFLUX OF IRANIAN BAHĀ'Ī STUDENTS TO BEIRUT

The first Iranian Baha'i known to have been educated in Beirut was Azizollah Mesbah, who attended the Université Saint-Joseph in the 1890s and became the headmaster of the Tarbiyat schools in Iran. By 1907 several more Baha'is had enrolled at the Jesuit institution.¹⁸ The first Baha'i known to have studied at the Syrian Protestant College, which was to become the more popular institution, was an Egyptian convert who entered the college in 1901.¹⁹ In 1908, the first year in which Baha'is are reported in SPC statistics, six Baha'is were enrolled in the college, a number that included at least one Arab.²⁰

The enrolment of Baha'is at SPC at this time may have been under reported, since, as an American Baha'i visiting Beirut in 1907 noted, the students did not always openly espouse their beliefs because of the hostility of Protestant missionaries.²¹ In fact, there were Baha'is attending SPC before 1908, but it is doubtful

15. Mirza Ahamd Sohrab, *Abdul Baha in Egypt* (London: Rider and Co., 1929), p. 272; Ahmad Sohrab 'Diary Letter' dated 17 April 1914, Ahmad Sohrab Papers, Baha'i National Archives.
16. Sohrab, *Abdul Baha in Egypt*, p. 354.
17. 'What Abdul-Baha said to five American Christian Missionaries', *Star of the West*, 12:1 (March 1921), pp. 14-15.
18. 'Azizullah Mesbah', *Bahā'ī World*, 10 (Wilmette: Bahā'ī Publishing Committee, 1949): 526; Charles Mason Remey, 'The Baghdadi Family of Beirut', in 'Baha'i Reminiscences Diary Letters and Other Documents', folio 35, p.5, New York Public Library, Oriental Division.
19. 'Dr M. Salih', *Bahā'ī World*, 9 (Wilmette: Bahā'ī Publishing Committee, 1945): 606.
20. Syrian Protestant College, *Forth-Sixth Annual Report to the Board of Trustees* (Beirut: Syrian Protestant College, 1914), pp. 6, 31. "Star of the West" adds to its Staff: Dr Zia Masbut Bagdadi', *Star of the West*, 2:5 (5 June 1911): 8.
21. Charles Mason Remey, 'The Baghdadi Family of Beirut', in 'Baha'i Reminiscences

that there was a group of Iranians among them. Nor is it likely that there was any organized group of Baha'i students in Beirut prior to 1906, the year when Badi' Boshru'i, who was to become one of the unofficial leaders of the Baha'i students, entered SPC and formed the Society of Baha'i Students.²² According to Baha'i sources, the number of Baha'i students grew fairly rapidly after this time, reaching about 30 by 1913–14 and 35 by 1917.²³ According to SPC publications, the number of Baha'i students reached 44 in 1919.²⁴

Both Baha'i and SPC/AUB sources indicate that Baha'i enrolment declined immediately after the First World War but increased again from the mid-1920s.²⁵ AUB sources record that the number of Baha'i students rose from eight in 1923 to 35 in 1927.²⁶ Group photographs taken by Baha'i students show their numbers to have reached 15 by 1924, and 34 by 1926, while contemporary Baha'i publications state that the number of students at AUB ranged between 35 and 38 from 1927 to 1931, while in 1929 and 1930 the total number of Baha'i students in Beirut exceeded sixty.²⁷ The latter number probably includes a significant number of students at the Université Saint-Joseph, as one student who began studying there in 1926 recalled that when he began his studies there were more Baha'i students at the French university than at AUB, though by the time he left the opposite was true.²⁸

There are no statistics in Baha'i sources for student enrolments after 1930, but the statistics AUB kept suggest a continuing increase in their numbers until 1940: between 17 and 26 students in the years 1930–34 and between 50 and 62 in the

- Diary Letters and Other Documents', folio 36, p. 5, New York Public Library, Oriental Division.
22. *The Program of the Society of Baha'i Students of Beirut 1929–1930* (n.p., n.d.); 'Mirza Badi Bushrui', *Bahá'í World*, 9 (1945): 545.
 23. 'Az taraf-i talāmiẓa-yi bahā'ī-yi Bairūt', *Najm-i Bākhhtar* [published as a Persian-language section of *Star of the West*] 5:5 (1914): 4–6; 'Some Excerpts from "A Brief History of the Baha'i Students of the American University of Beirut" (by Z. N. Zeine)', in *Program of the weekly meeting of the Baha'i students at Beirut, Syria, 1930–31* (S.I.: n.p., n.d.); Riza Khadimi, *Shoghi Effendi in Oxford* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1999), p. 2.
 24. Notes compiled by H. E. Chehabi from SPC and AUB yearbooks.
 25. Interview with Wargha Milton, June 2002, Hong Kong; Notes on SPC publications.
 26. Notes by Chehabi.
 27. 'A Brief History of the Baha'i Students'; 'News from the Spiritual Assembly of Beirut', *Bahá'í News*, 42 (1930): 5; *Bahá'í Year Book*, vol. 1 (New York: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1928), p. 104; Photograph 4935–65, Audio-Visual Department, Baha'i World Centre.
 28. Interview with Zabih Qorban, conducted by H. E. Chehabi and Nadim Shehadi, June 1995, London.

years 1937–40.²⁹ Fereydoun Hoveyda, who was a student in Beirut in the 1930s, recalled that there were only about fifty Iranian students in the city and that most were Shi'is, with 'a few Iranian Jews, Zoroastrians and Baha'is'.³⁰ While Hoveyda, may have wanted to minimize any association with Baha'is, given that his brother had long been accused of having a Baha'i affiliation,³¹ his recollection of the total number of Iranian students is also at significant variance with AUB records and requires explanation. Since Hoveyda's social network was probably centred in the city's French educational institutions, they may not have encompassed many of the Iranians at AUB; if so, his recollections are evidence that the Baha'i student population had again become concentrated at AUB. Bearing in mind that the AUB students represented the majority, but not all, of the Baha'i students in Beirut, it would be reasonable to estimate that by 1940 the total number of Baha'i students in the city was about seventy.

The number of Baha'i students fell dramatically after 1940. AUB sources show that their number ranged from four to eight throughout the rest of the decade, while one Baha'i who attended the university in the years 1947–49 recalled that there was, at most, one other Baha'i student in Beirut at that time.³² Only three Baha'is are listed in the AUB figures for 1950 and AUB records indicate that Baha'i enrolment ranged between six and twelve until 1956, and it does not appear to have exceeded this range in subsequent years, even though the number of Iranians attending the university rose dramatically (See Appendix A).³³

29. *The American University of Beirut: Description of its Organization and Work* (n.p.: n.p., 1934), Appendix 11; Stephen Penrose, *That They May Have Life: The Story of the American University of Beirut 1866–1941* (New York: Trustees of the American University of Beirut, 1941), p. 333.
30. Fereydoun Hoveyda, 'Five o'clock tea from my student's days in Beirut', *The Iranian*, 7 August 2002. <http://www.iranian.com/FereydounHoveyda/2002/August/Tea/index.html>
31. Amir Abbas Hoveyda's grandfather and probably his father were Baha'is, but he never joined the faith. See Abbas Milani, *The Persian Sphinx: Amir Abbas Hoveyda and the Riddle of the Iranian Revolution* (Washington, DC: Mage, 2000), pp. 43–4, 47.
32. Notes by Chehabi; Interview with Soheil Bushrui, 3 January 1997, Haifa; Penrose, *That They May Have Life*, p. 333.
33. American University of Beirut, *President's Annual Report 1952–1953* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1953), Appendix E, and *President's Annual Report 1956–1957*, p. 29. Personal communications from LZ (a Baha'i who resided in Beirut from 1943 to 1969; dated 27 May 1996; EZ (a Baha'i who resided in Beirut from 1968 to 1986) dated 7 May 1996; and Wargha Milton (who resided in Beirut from 1969 to 1973) dated 5 May 1996. LZ recalled that the number of students was between ten and twelve in the 1960s; EZ recalled that there might have been as many as 60 in the 1970s, but Milton recalled that the number ranged from two to ten. I have anonymized

Presumably, the initial decline in enrolment was precipitated by the Second World War, in particular the 1941 Allied invasion of Lebanon. After the war, especially after the formation of the state of Israel, a significant number of persons who had been expelled from the Baha'i community, whom Baha'is were instructed to shun, had settled in Beirut.³⁴ Within two decades the influence of these persons had dissipated and had no further effect on the travel of Baha'is to Beirut. However, the turbulent events unfolding in the area prevented them from coming in large numbers, and most of the Baha'i students were, thereafter, of local origin.

The total number of Baha'i students educated in Beirut cannot be determined, but a reasonable approximation can be reached by the comparative use of Baha'i and AUB sources. In 1930, Bayard Dodge prepared a list of 28 Baha'i students who had then graduated from the AUB, while two more Baha'is were listed in a 1923 alumni directory that listed only graduates, bringing the number who had actually graduated, according to AUB records, to 30. I have compiled the names of an additional 24 Baha'is who were educated in Beirut prior to 1929, primarily from lists of Baha'i students dating from 1913 and 1914 and from group photographs.³⁵ However, there were undoubtedly more than 54 Baha'i students prior to 1929 because, as we have noted, they were not all known to university authorities, and there are no lists of students in Baha'i sources for the 1915–28 period with which to compile a more complete record. However, the Baha'i students identified in Baha'i and AUB sources probably constitute a significant majority of the students from this time period, and a reasonable estimate of the total would be about 60 to 70 students.

Adding the number of students named in a Baha'i source for 1929 (63), to the number of Baha'i students listed in AUB sources in 1934 (22) and 1940 (62), we can compute a minimum figure of 147 students for the period from 1929 to 1940. However, the number of Baha'i students in Beirut clearly exceeded this. The figures for 1934 and 1940 did not include Baha'i students at other Beirut institutions. Moreover, the statistics cited here are spaced more than four years apart, and could not represent an accurate total unless a large percentage of the students received both undergraduate and graduate education there. Although some Baha'is did this during the period under discussion, it is actually more likely that Baha'i students attended college in Beirut for an average of fewer than four years. Dodge

some of my informants to protect them and/or relatives who are residing in Lebanon.

34. Interview with Wargha Milton, May 1996. Personal communication from Mark Hellaby, 26 September 1996. Personal communication from RZ, 10 September 2002.
35. Yūnis Khān Afrūkhtah, *Khāṭirāt-i nuḥ sālāh* (Los Angeles: Kalimāt Press, 1983), p. 503; Sohrab, *Abdul Baha in Egypt*, pp. 271 and 329; Photographs 1547 and 5129–36, Audio-Visual Department Baha'i World Centre; and 'Diary Letter' from Shoghi Rabbani dated 29–31 July 1919, Albert Vail Papers, Baha'i National Archives.

noted that many of the Baha'is who attended AUB did not graduate, while the daughter of one of the students who attended AUB in the early 1930s observed that many students attended for only one or two years.³⁶ Taking these factors into account, it would be reasonable to estimate that there were at least 200 Baha'i students in Beirut between 1929 and 1940, and the total number of Baha'i students educated in Beirut between 1906 and 1940 was probably about 300.

Who were these students? Of the 97 whose birthplaces could be identified, 43 (44.7 per cent) were born in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine or Egypt, which indicates that the Baha'is of the Near East were significantly over represented in this population. Although some of these students were Arab or Turkish converts, most were descendants of Iranian Baha'is who had gone into exile with Baha'ullah or who had settled in the Near East to be close to him. Indeed, 13 of these students came directly from the Iranian Baha'i colony in Haifa. Thus, most of the Near Eastern students came from families that were highly committed to the Baha'i religion and, because of geographic proximity to Haifa and Akka, many of them had been closely associated with the leaders of the faith. The geographic distribution of student birthplaces within Iran shows no significant biases except that Shiraz is over-represented, a result of descendants of the Bab (known as Afnan) attending school there and of another family sending a number of its members there for education.³⁷

Another notable feature of the Baha'i student population was the presence in it of women. According to a diary kept by Ahmad Sohrab, one of Abdul-Baha's secretaries, as of February 1914 there were six Baha'i women attending the 'girls college' in Beirut and another was about to enrol.³⁸ One of these was apparently Abdul-Baha's grand-daughter, who was then attending the girls school affiliated with AUB, presumably the 'girls college' referred to above; another of his grand-daughters was enrolled there from 1921.³⁹ However, no women appear in the group photographs of students until 1930 and there are none mentioned in other Baha'i sources until 1929, at which time the names of 20 are listed in a Baha'i student publication and at which time they first appear in the statistics compiled by the AUB.⁴⁰ If there were female students throughout the late 1910s and 1920s, it would appear that they did not participate in Baha'i student activities or that they had their

36. Communication from LZ, 2 May 1996.

37. Five members of the Dehqan family in Shiraz were educated in Beirut.

38. Ahmad Sohrab, 'Diary Letter' for 16 February 1914, Ahmad Sohrab Papers.

39. *Star of the West*, vol. 5 (1914): 58, and vol. 12 (1921): 183.

40. Photograph number 5144–37 (taken in March 1930), Audio-Visual Department, Baha'i World Centre; *The Program of the Society of Baha'i Students of Beirut, 1929–1930. Annual Report of the American University of Beirut, 1952–1953* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1954), Appendix I.

own activities for which no records have yet surfaced. Nevertheless, the possibility that a significant minority of the Iranian Baha'i students were women is in itself significant, as it would place Baha'is in the vanguard of those offering advanced education to Iranian women.

The sheer number of Baha'i students in Beirut and the patterns of representation in that population suggest that prominent Baha'i families may have made a coordinated effort to send their children there for schooling. The influx of Baha'i students seems to have begun when Abdul-Baha began to send members of his extended family and others who were under his patronage to Beirut to be educated. He also praised SPC and, as noted above, discouraged Iranians from going directly to Europe for education.⁴¹ Undoubtedly, his favourable views of SPC and the fact that he sent members of his own family to that institution influenced other Baha'is, especially those who were in close contact with him. Then, too, once the influx of students had begun, the group of Baha'i students itself became a source of attraction, as education in Beirut came to be seen as a means of reinforcing Baha'i identity and, to some extent, of sustaining Iranian identity among the children of Iranian immigrant families in the Arab world.

ACTIVITIES OF BAHAI STUDENTS

Baha'i students had begun to hold weekly Sunday meetings on the SPC campus by 1907.⁴² Initially, the campus meetings were informal and were held in a student's room or outdoors on the campus, but as the number of Baha'i students increased the meetings became more formal and other activities were initiated. For example, by 1914 the Baha'i students had formed an 'Oratorical Club', which held meetings at least once a week. Members offered formal speeches in both Persian and English,⁴³ a development probably influenced by the annual 'declamation contests' held at SPC.⁴⁴ In addition, former ulema, such as Mirza Abolfazl Golpayegani and Abdolhosein Tafti, visited Beirut to give Baha'i classes to the students there.⁴⁵ The students also had extensive social contact with each other, frequently sharing meals, meeting off campus in the homes of resident Baha'is, going on hikes and picnics together, and sometimes living together.⁴⁶

41. Interview with Soheil Bushrui, 3 January 1997, Haifa.

42. Remey, 'The Baghdadi Family', p. 5.

43. Ahmad Sohrab, 'Diary Letter', 31 August 1914, Ahmad Sohrab Papers.

44. 'Program: Prize Declamation Contest, SPC', Howard Sweetser Bliss Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, Box 2, folder 64; *Al-Kulliyeh*, 1:4 (1910): 130.

45. *Bahiyiyih Khanum* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982), p. 219; Mihrābkhāni, *Mīrzā Abu'l-Faḍl*, p. 14.

46. Interview with Soheil Bushrui; Ali M. Yazdi, *Blessings Beyond Measure*:

Because many of the Baha'i students started in the SPC-run preparatory school, there was a wide range of ages represented, and the older students tended to form mentoring relationships with the younger ones. The importance of this informal mentoring in the education and personal development of the Baha'i students was noted both by Baha'i observers and college administrators, as were the paternal roles played by the Baghdadi family and later by Baha'i faculty and staff.⁴⁷

Probably even more important, however, were the relationships they developed with Baha'is in Haifa. During Easter and summer vacations, the students would go *en masse* to Haifa, where they would spend extended periods of time with Baha'i leaders in the large Baha'i communities of Haifa and Akka.⁴⁸ The programmes of study that were prepared for these students would include lessons in Baha'i history and doctrines, classes with veteran Baha'i teachers (*moballeghin*) such as Mirza Haydar Ali Esfahani, and the preparation of papers and talks for delivery before local Baha'is, usually in English.⁴⁹ In addition, they would attend the talks that Abdul-Baha, Shoghi Rabbani and resident Baha'is would give to visiting pilgrims. They also studied Persian poetry and memorized Persian Baha'i writings. In their own meetings in Haifa, they chanted prayers and poetry, sang Baha'i and SPC songs in Persian and English, and engaged in discussions and debates about their religion and contemporary issues.⁵⁰ These formal and informal activities and relationships fostered a strong sense of solidarity among the Baha'i students and provided a powerful basis for socialization into the values and priorities of the contemporary Baha'i community.

Recollections of 'Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988), pp. 55–7; Afrūkhtah, *Khātirāt-i nuḥ sālāh* (London: Ithaca Press, 1980), pp. 495–503; Duktur Ḥabīb Mu'ayyad, *Khātirāt-i Ḥabīb*, vol. 1 (Teheran: Mu'assasa-yi millī-yi maṭbū'āt-i amrī, 118/1340/1961), pp. 82–119; 'Khātirāt-i Badī' Bushrū'ī' (in private hands); *Yāddāshthā-yi Duktur Qāsim-i Ghānī* (London: Ithaca Press, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 107–11. Although Ghani understandably does not mention any Baha'i affiliation in his memoirs, he is listed on a contemporary list of Baha'i students, he mentions by name a number of the Baha'i students in Beirut, and states that he spent his summers in Palestine. His sojourn in Beirut is discussed in Chapter 5.

47. Dodge, 'Education', p. 371; Remey, 'The Baghdadi Family of Beirut', p. 5; Sohrab, *Abdul Baha in Egypt*, p. 329.

48. 'Az ṭaraf-i talāmaza-yi bahā'ī', pp. 4–6.

49. The basic lessons are contained in Ahmad Suhrāb, *Al-Risāla al-Tis' 'Ashariyya* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sa'āda, 1919). Other 'courses' are mentioned in the memoirs of one of the students: 'Valiyu'llah Varqa', *Bahá'í World*, 13 (1970): 831. The talks given by students are mentioned in Sohrab, *Abdul Baha in Egypt*, p. 352. Written presentations prepared by some of the students can be found in the papers of Ahmad Sohrab, in the US Baha'i National Archives.

50. Ahmad Sohrab, 'Diary Letter', dated 16 February 1914, Ahmad Sohrab Papers.

With what values were they being inculcated? Some indication can be discerned from the talks Abdul-Baha delivered before these students. These consisted predominantly of exhortations to pray, lead moral lives and achieve excellence in academic studies. However, they contained other important themes as well. For example, despite a clear commitment to internationalism, Abdul-Baha fostered a form of Iranian patriotism. He often described Iran as being in a state of decay and decline, saw education as one of the antidotes for this condition, and seems to have viewed the students as a force for the modernization of the country.⁵¹ He called on them to choose careers in fields that would contribute to the development of Iran, such as agriculture.⁵² One of the motifs in his talks and writings following the constitutional revolution in Iran was the need for different political factions in the country to unite in order effectively to stave off the influence of European powers.⁵³ Although he had been and was an advocate for a constitution and a parliamentary form of government, in the post-constitutional period he discouraged Iranian Baha'is from active political involvement.⁵⁴ That these themes were impressed on the students is suggested by the topics of the theses some of them wrote, which relate to the revitalization of Iran.⁵⁵ And Ahmad Sohrab, who coordinated the students' activities until the end of the First World War, asserted that they would 'form an invulnerable force for liberalism in Persia' and that 'they will become fine and progressive citizens of Persia when they return to that country.'⁵⁶

BAHA'IS AND THE AUB COMMUNITY

The initial influx of Baha'i students to Beirut coincided with changes in the edu-

51. Ahmad Sohrab, 'Diary Letter', dated 12 October 1913 and 17 April 1914, Ahmad Sohrab Papers.
52. Sohrab, *Abdul Baha in Egypt*, pp. 292–3.
53. See Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution 1905–1909* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), pp. 424–9.
54. Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, Abdul-Baha's successor, was even more emphatic about abstaining from political involvement, expelling from the Baha'i community some members who refused to adhere to this instruction. See, for example, *Bahá'í News*, 69 (1932): 3–4; 78 (1933): 2; 140 (1940): 2; 143 (1941): 11–12. For the retreat from political involvement see Juan R. I. Cole, *Modernity and the Millennium: The Genesis of the Baha'i Faith in the Nineteenth-Century Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 205–6 n9.
55. Nawal Mikdashi (compiler) *Masters' Theses 1909–1970* (University of Beirut, Jaffet Memorial Library, 1971). For example, Azizullah Bahadur's thesis (p. 14) was on 'Social evils or hindrances to Persia's progress', and Abdul Husayn Bakir's (p. 52) was on 'Persia in Transformation'.
56. Sohrab, *Abdul Baha in Egypt*, pp. 270 and 301.

cational philosophy of the Syrian Protestant College. The missionaries who founded the college viewed it primarily as an evangelical institution and required all the professors to sign what amounted to an oath of allegiance to Protestant beliefs and missionary goals.⁵⁷ By the early twentieth century, however, educators at the college were not of one mind about how to approach non-Christians. Howard Bliss, the president of the college from 1902 to 1920, while maintaining that SPC was a Christian institution asserted that it had 'no exclusive ecclesiastical or denominational interests' and opposed any form of religious discrimination.⁵⁸

In the wake of protests from Jewish and Muslim students in 1908 over the required attendance at Christian worship services, however, a different approach to non-Christians, and with it a new rationale for the existence of the college, began to emerge. The first sign of this may have been the administration's attempt to justify mandatory Christian activities as a means of promoting solidarity among the diverse ethnic and religious groups represented in the student body at the college.⁵⁹ A new generation of educators envisioned an institution that 'believes in the efficacy of the religious dynamic in shaping the lives of men and the destinies of nations ... [but] believes that the form and manner in which this religious force may effectively reveal and express itself varies widely.'⁶⁰ This liberal view of the college's purpose may be said to have triumphed when Bayard Dodge was selected as president in 1923. Dodge advocated and pursued a pluralist vision for the university in which the institution would foster morals and faith in God but would seek to unite its diverse population rather than championing any particular creed.⁶¹

This liberal philosophy of education allowed the Baha'i students a freedom of expression and open association that probably existed for them nowhere else in the Middle East. Moreover, it resonated with the ethos of the Baha'i community itself, a fact that Dodge himself acknowledged. In an article written in about 1930, Dodge observed that 'the Baha'is intuitively understand internationalism. They mix with all sorts of companions without prejudice, and help to develop a spirit of fraternity on the campus. They carry their neutrality into active life, and it is largely because

57. 'Declaration of Principles' in *Certificate of Incorporation and Constitution of the Syrian Protestant College* (New York: Edward Jenkins Sons, n.d.), p. 16.
58. 'Minutes of the Faculty of the Syrian Protestant College', *Al-Kulliyeh*, 6:9 (June 1920): 67–8. See also Elie Kedourie, 'The American University of Beirut', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 3:1 (1966): 74–90, for a discussion of this issue.
59. Forty-Third Annual Report of the Syrian Protestant College to the Board of Trustees, 1908–1909 (Beirut: Syrian Protestant College, 1909), p. 14.
60. Professor Nikoley, 'The Religious Ideals of the University', *Al-Kulliyeh*, 9:8 (June 1923): 155.
61. 'Inaugural Address Delivered by President Bayard Dodge', *Al-Kulliyeh*, 9:8 (June 1923): 128–31.

of the freedom from partisanship that several Baha'is have been entrusted with great responsibility.⁶²

As Dodge's article reflected, a cordial relationship developed between Baha'i leaders in Akka and at least some administrators and faculty. It was not uncommon for college faculty and staff, including the president, to correspond with Abdul-Baha, his successor Shoghi Effendi Rabbani or other Baha'is in the Haifa/Akka area and to meet them during visits to Palestine. According to Dodge, Rabbani helped select Baha'i recipients for the scholarships Western Baha'is had endowed, and gave advice on various matters relating to the college.⁶³ Baha'i travellers sometimes spent extended periods of time at the college where college officials received them hospitably. And American Baha'is were allowed to transfer funds to their coreligionists in the Near East through the SPC's offices.⁶⁴

Despite cordial relationships with some faculty and administrators, in the 1910s and early 1920s Baha'i students at SPC felt the need to be discreet about their activities, not only because this is what they had learned to do when growing up in a social milieu that was hostile to their religion but also because some missionaries associated with the college harboured antipathy for them.⁶⁵ The missionaries' antagonism was probably rooted in the Baha'is' failure to provide a bridge to the conversion of Muslims for which the Protestant missionaries had hoped. Moreover, the Baha'i religion was then beginning to find converts among the Protestant populations of Europe and America. In the 1910s and 1920s Baha'i students were not allowed to form an official association; they complained of mistreatment from missionaries and, according to Zeine Zeine, had to be careful to meet 'alone by themselves, away from the mouth of the slanderer and the eye of the evil-teller.'⁶⁶

Despite their apparent efforts to maintain a low profile, they clearly formed a distinct and visible group on the campus from the 1910s onward. Although the group included Arabs and Turks, the students were predominantly Iranian (or of Iranian descent) and Persian culture was both a source of group cohesion and a factor that distinguished them within the campus community. This is suggested by their study of Persian poetry and use of Persian in their publications and at some of their meetings. In addition, university officials referred to them – and they seem to

62. Bayard Dodge, 'Education as a Source of Good Will', *Bahá'í World*, vol. 4 (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1933), p. 371.

63. Dodge, 'Education', p. 371.

64. Ahmad Sohrab to Joseph Hannen, 8 July 1915, Hannen-Knobloch Papers, Baha'i National Archives.

65. 'Some Excerpts from "A Brief History of the Baha'i Students of the American University of Beirut"'.
 66. Zeine, 'A Brief History of the Baha'i Students'.

have referred to themselves – as 'the Persian students',⁶⁷ confirming that their nationality partly shaped their group identity. Furthermore, Yunes Afrukhteh, who began studying at SPC in 1909, said there were several *Bahá'izadehs*, a term used in Baha'i discourse to refer to non-Baha'i children of Baha'is, in the group of students with whom he associated. This suggests that cultural identity may have marked the boundaries of the group as much as religious belief.⁶⁸ Still, it is clear that within this group the Baha'i students tried both to rekindle Baha'i identities in the children of Baha'is and to convert other Iranians, with at least some success.⁶⁹

While the Baha'is formed an Iranian enclave on campus they did not segregate themselves from the rest of the student population and indeed took an active role in campus affairs. In the alumni newsletter, Baha'is are mentioned as giving speeches and musical performances, as well as serving on student committees and actively participating in the West Hall Brotherhood, a meeting intended to bridge ethnic, national and religious divisions within the student body.⁷⁰ Ironically, the period in which they achieved the greatest prominence in campus affairs seems to have been before the First World War when their activities were subject to certain constraints. Zeine Zeine describes the period from 1906 to 1918 as the 'golden age' for the Baha'i students at SPC, a period during which he says they were seen as a model for other student groups because of their ability to transcend ethnic and cultural differences. And Baha'i students during that period certainly exerted a significant influence on campus affairs. For example, in 1914, one of the first Baha'i students, Badi' Boshru'i, was president of the student union, another was associate secretary, and yet another edited the student newspaper.⁷¹ Moreover, 15 per cent of the students to receive Master's degrees at SPC/AUB before 1924 were Baha'is and some of these served as instructors at the college, perhaps the positions of responsibility alluded to by Dodge.

Both Dodge and Zeine agree that it was the internationalism of these students that caused them to be held in high esteem on the SPC campus. It is therefore probably no coincidence that the period of their greatest influence came when religious and cultural divisions within the campus community were a matter of concern to administrators and when the missionary orientation of the college was under attack. Although they themselves were mostly Iranian, the Baha'is promoted the ideal of a community and society in which religious and cultural divisions were trans-

67. Sohrab, *Abdul Baha in Egypt*, pp. 388–9.

68. Afrukhteh, *Khāṭirāt-i Nuh Sālah*, p. 503.

69. *Khāṭirāt-i Ḥabīb*, pp. 82–97; 'Khāṭirāt-i Bushrū'i' (mss in private hands); Ali Kuli Khan to Baha'is of Chicago [c. August 1908], House of Spirituality Papers, US Baha'i National Archive.

70. *Al-Kulliyeh*, 5:3 (1914): 85; 5:6 (1914): 192; 7:9 (1916): 138.

71. *Al-Kulliyeh*, 5:5 (1914): 151; 5:7 (1914): 234.

cended.⁷² The West Hall Brotherhood, which met weekly on the SPC campus and, with its motto 'that which we have in common is greater than our differences', displaced Christian worship as the most popular gathering on campus in the early 1920s, reflected this vision. While it is doubtful that Baha'is alone inspired the West Hall Brotherhood or changed the rationale for the existence of SPC, they were one of the forces that brought them about and appear to have been seen as allies by those, such as Dodge, who espoused a pluralist vision of the campus community. Faculty and administrators who wished to transcend the missionary roots of the college may have favoured Baha'is for positions of influence because they promoted values such as civic responsibility and religious tolerance that they were seeking to promulgate within the campus subculture.

In the 1920s, as the official stance of the SPC towards non-Christians became more tolerant and the ethos of the campus community became more pluralist, Baha'i students were perhaps less distinguished within the student body and less critical as allies. The enrolment of significant numbers of non-Baha'i Iranians, beginning in the late 1930s, may also have decreased their visibility and distinctiveness as a group on the campus. However, the pluralism and increased tolerance undoubtedly made AUB even more attractive to Baha'i students, whose numbers, as we have seen, increased throughout the 1930s and, while they were less prominent in university affairs, the cordial relationship between them and some campus officials lasted at least until the 1940s.

BEYOND THE CAMPUS: CONTRIBUTIONS OF BAHÁ'Í STUDENTS

As a transient group with few social ties beyond the campuses where they were educated, the Baha'i students cannot be expected to have had much influence on the wider community; however, they did contribute substantially to the development of an Arab Baha'i community in Lebanon. A handful of students remained in Beirut after graduating, and their families constituted the major component of the Beirut Baha'i community for at least a generation. Those who stayed, some of them

72. Like al-Bustani, who had influenced an earlier generation of students at the college, Baha'is sought to minimize and transcend religious divisions. Baha'ullah had urged his followers to consort with the followers of all religions. However, he saw nationalism as one more social division that needed to be overcome. In response to the hadith 'Love of country [*watan*] is an article of faith', which had been popularized by advocates of nationalism such as al-Bustani and the Young Ottomans, he argued that in this day 'It is not his to boast who loveth his country, but it is his who loveth the world.' *Majmū'a-yi alvāh-i mubāraka-yi ḥadrat-i Bahá'ullāh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1978), p. 290; the English translation quoted above can be found in *Tablets of Bahá'ullāh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Hofheim-Langenhain: Bahá'í Verlag, 1980), pp. 87–8.

already second-generation Iranian *émigrés* in the Arab world, became increasingly Arabicized and they spread their religion among Lebanese Christians and Muslims of Arab and, to a lesser extent, Turkish extraction. After the exodus of some of the more recent Iranian Baha'i immigrants in the 1970s in the wake of the civil war, the community consisted mostly of Arabs or Arabicized Persians.⁷³

Given their numbers, it is probable that the Baha'i students who returned to Iran contributed significantly to the process of modernization there. As we have observed, there were about 50 students enrolled by the end of the First World War, and about 100 had attended the schools there before 1929. For purposes of comparison, we can observe that the Iranian government sent 30 students overseas to be educated in 1911, and about 70 were educated in the West between the end of the First World War and 1928.⁷⁴ Between 1928 and 1934, the Iranian ministry of education sent 640 students overseas for education, and during these years a total of 1175 Iranians studied abroad, 400 of them self-financed. If the Baha'i figures for 1929 and 1930 are accurate, there were at least 85 Baha'i students at AUB during this period, a figure that represents 7.2 per cent of all overseas Iranian students and 21.25 per cent of those who financed their own education. Thus, it is clear that Baha'i students in Beirut made up a significant percentage of these Iranian students, but a percentage that declined over the period under discussion.

Unfortunately, biographical data on the Iranian Baha'i students are limited, so it is difficult to gauge what impact they may have had on Iran. However, because so many Baha'i students had come from the Near East, one would expect a significant percentage of them to have chosen not to settle in Iran, and this appears to be the case. Of the 30 students who had graduated by 1930, only eight were living in Iran, two were living in the West, and ten had settled in the Near East.

It has only been possible to compile career data on 24 of the Baha'i students, but this sample suggests that they did not enter government service in the same percentages as the other Iranians educated overseas. Of the twelve residing in Iran, seven were physicians and all but one of them spent their careers in private practice. One was a lawyer, two worked in business and two were midwives or nurses.⁷⁵ Only Qasem Ghani, whose connections with the Baha'i community had

73. Personal communications from EZ, 7 May 1996 and 8 May 1996; Wargha Milton, 5 May 1996; Juan Cole, 26 September 1996 and 27 September 1996.

74. Reza Arasteh, 'The Education of Iranian Leaders in Europe and America', *International Review of Education*, 8:3–4 (1963): 444. David Menashri, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 125.

75. Dodge, 'Education', p. 372; *Who's Who: The American University of Beirut Alumni Association, 1870–1923*, pp. 45, 50, 143, 145. 'Habīb Mu'ayyad', p. 503; 'Dr Youness Afrukhtih', *Bahá'í World*, vol. 12 (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1956), pp. 679–81.

long since been severed, had any kind of government or political career.⁷⁶ Statistics compiled in 1934 by AUB on Iranian alumni, the vast majority of whom would have been Baha'is, show a similar pattern: fourteen were doctors in private practice; ten were in business, three were employed in government education; and two held clerical positions.⁷⁷ By contrast, nearly all the Iranians educated in the West during this time period went to work in the public sector, as civil servants, teachers or professors, or in some other form of government employment.⁷⁸

While the absence of Baha'i students from political posts was clearly a result of personal choice, their limited numbers in other government positions may have been partly due to discriminatory hiring practices. Qodsi Ashraf, who graduated from AUB in 1929, is known to have been denied employment at the ministry of education because she was a Baha'i, and Iranian Baha'i leaders complained of a pattern of hiring discrimination and religiously motivated dismissals in the civil service in the 1930s.⁷⁹ That they might have been inclined to pursue government careers is suggested by the career patterns of those students who settled outside Iran. Of these twelve, only two were physicians in private practice, while the remaining were teachers in public schools or civil servants, mostly in Egypt, Iraq and Palestine, although Baha'is were directed to leave the latter in the late 1940s.⁸⁰

Thus, while the return to Iran of Baha'is educated in Beirut undoubtedly helped the modernization of the country, their contributions appear to have been

primarily in the private sector. Of those AUB students for whom biographical information has been located, for example, two helped establish new Baha'i schools in Iran in the 1920s, and one played a critical role in founding a Baha'i-sponsored hospital.⁸¹

THE IMPACT OF AUB GRADUATES ON THE GLOBAL BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY

The primary impact of the education of Baha'i students in Beirut, however, was probably on the Baha'i community itself, both in Iran and elsewhere. A number of scholars have observed that, beginning in the 1920s, the Baha'i community went through a significant change in its mode of organization and self-conception. Among the changes that began to evolve at this time were the establishment of clear criteria for membership of the community, which created stronger community boundaries and more internal cohesion, the development of democratically elected consultative bodies to oversee the affairs of the community at the national (and later international) levels, the increasing influence of Baha'is in Europe and North America on the activities of the global community, and the use of systematic multi-year plans to spread the religion.⁸²

The students educated in Beirut clearly contributed to this transformation, though further research is needed to determine how much of this process can be traced to them. Here we will simply observe that the administrators, secretaries and translators at the Baha'i World Centre were drawn disproportionately from among these students. Several of the students served as translators and secretaries to Abdul-Baha either before or after they had completed their education. The most important of these was Shoghi Rabbani, who graduated from SPC in 1917, and became the 'guardian' (*vali*) of the religion upon Abdul-Baha's death in 1921.

Under Rabbani's direction, the leadership of the Baha'i community moved away from a reliance on charismatic authority, and developed a formal bureaucratic structure with administrative powers residing in elected councils, and appointed 'Hands of the Cause' (*ayadi-ye amrollah*) who officially assumed the functions of the converted ulema of earlier years.

Here it is worth noting that four of the 27 'Hands of the Cause' that Shoghi Rabbani appointed, and most of those of Iranian extraction, had been students at AUB. In Iran, at least three of the former AUB students served on the nine-person National Spiritual Assembly, and others held regional administrative positions.⁸³

81. 'Dr Youness Afrukhtih', pp. 679–81.

82. Peter Smith, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions: From Messianic Shi'ism to a World Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 115–35.

83. 'Report prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran' and

76. Ghani was elected to the Iranian parliament, and also held appointed government positions. See Abbas Milani, 'Qāsem Ganī', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 10 (New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2001): 276–8. According to Baha'i records, he was a Baha'i in his youth, but had not been involved in the community for many years when he began his political career. See Baha'i World Centre Research Department, Memorandum to the Universal House of Justice, 4 February 1997.

77. *The American University of Beirut: Description of its Organization and Work* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1934), Appendix 11.

78. Reza Arasteh, 'The Role of Intellectuals in Administrative Development and Social Change in Modern Iran', *International Review of Education*, 9:3 (1963–4): 328 and Menashri, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran*, pp. 135–7. Menashri makes the point, however, that many returning students had multiple careers.

79. 'Report prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran', *Bahá'í World* vol. 6 (New York: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1937), p. 96; 'Report prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran', *Bahá'í World*, 7 (New York: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1939): 157. These reports mention incidents in the Ministry of Finance and the Department of Highways. The information on Qodsi Ashraf comes from an e-mail communication from Vahid Behmardi to H. E. Chehabi.

80. *Who's Who: The American University of Beirut Alumni Association, 1870–1923*, pp. 45, 50, 103, 134, 138, 141; Dodge, 'Education', p. 372.

And at least one member of the nine-member Universal House of Justice, elected in 1963, had been an AUB student.

The presence of Western-educated leaders in the Baha'i community undoubtedly contributed towards the community's gradual transcendence of its Shi'i roots, a process that Rabbani deliberately sought to facilitate. However, these leaders did not immediately displace the Baha'i-converted ulema of earlier generations. Three converted ulema, Mirza Asadollah Mazandarani, Seyyed Abbas Alavi, and Eshraq Khavari – not AUB-educated students – were the most influential Iranian Baha'i scholars and teachers in Iran in the post-Second World War period until the 1960s. But they were the last Iranian Baha'i leaders to have been educated in *madrasas*. Subsequently, virtually all those in the higher levels of leadership of the Baha'i community have had a Western education, a change to which the graduates of institutions of higher learning in Beirut contributed significantly.

CONCLUSION

Between 1906 and 1940, about 300 Baha'is of Iranian extraction attended the American University of Beirut, its predecessor institution the Syrian Protestant College, or the secondary school affiliated with them. While these people appear to have contributed to the modernization of Iran, self-imposed restrictions on political activity and/or employment discrimination limited their contributions in the public sector. The most lasting legacy of these students was probably on the Baha'i community itself, particularly in Iran, where the presence of a number of Western-educated Baha'is in leading positions in the community, rather than those who had been educated in *madrasas*, signalled that the Baha'i community had taken a significant step towards transcending its roots in Shi'i Islam.

'Addresses of Bahá'í Administrative Divisions in Iran, 1935–1936' in *Bahá'í World* vol. 6 (1937), pp. 94 and 524; 'Addresses of Bahá'í Administrative Divisions in Iran, 1937–1938', *Bahá'í World*, 7 (1939): 575.

APPENDIX A

STATISTICS ON BAHÁ'Í AND IRANIAN STUDENTS IN BEIRUT

Year	Iranians in AUB and related schools (from AUB sources) ¹	Iranian women at AUB and related schools (from AUB sources) ²	Bahá'í Women at AUB and related schools (from AUB sources) ³	Bahá'is in AUB and related schools (AUB publications) ⁴	Total number of Bahá'í students in Beirut (from Bahá'í sources) ⁵
1906					
1907					
1908	6			7	
1909					
1910				5	
1911					
1912					
1913					30
1914					27
1915					
1916				19	
1917				16	35
1918				11	
1919				44	
1920	9			22	
1921	19			18	
1922				12	
1923	22			8	
1924	36			15	≥15
1925	43			17	≥15
1926	48			25	≥34
1927	57			35	≥35
1928					
1929		1			63
1930	62	1	1	26	62–63
1931	44	2	2	16	
1932	51		1	17–19	
1933	48	3	1	17–20	
1934	47	4	3	22	
1935	48	7	5	20	
1936	37	3	6	15	
1937	32	2	4	8–50	
1938	25		6	6–52	
1939	27		9	10–55	
1940	24	1	11	62	

1941	21	1	13	7
1942	26	5	8	8
1943	57	1	5	4
1944	58	1	3	3
1945	52	1	3	1
1946	32	2	6	3
1947	24	1	6	4
1948	20	2	2	4
1949	19	1	9	4
1950	15			3
1951	15			6
1952				10
1953				9
1954				10
1955	33			7-22
1956	43			6
1957	78			5
1958	108			
1959	120			3
1960	121			1
1961	152			3
1962	132			4
1963	152			4
1964	147			

1. Statistics for 1921, 1923-27, 1930-51 and 1955-60 were provided by H. E. Chehabi based on his own notes on AUB publications. Other sources are as follows: 1908, *Forty-third Annual Report of the Syrian Protestant College* p. 31; 1923 and 1936-40, Penrose, *That They May Have Life*, p. 211; 1938-39, *Al-Kulliyeh*, vol. xi, no. 2: 41-2.
2. Statistics are from *Report of the American University of Beirut, 1952-1953* (Beirut: AUB, 1954) Appendix I.
3. Statistics are from *Report of the American University of Beirut, 1952-1953* (Beirut: AUB, 1954) Appendix I.
4. Statistics in the column come from the following sources: 1906, *Forty-Sixth Annual Report to the Board of Trustees*, pp. 6, 31; 1908, *Al-Kulliyeh*, 1:1: 6 and 2:1: 21; 1932-34, *The American University of Beirut: Description of Its Organization and Work* (n.p. 1934) Appendix II; 1937-40, Penrose, *That They May Have Life*, p. 333; 1950-52, *AUB President's Annual Report, 1952-1953*, Appendix E; 1954-56, *President's Annual Report, 1956-1957*, p. 29. Statistics for 1916-27, 1920-51, 1956-58, and 1960 came from H. E. Chehabi's notes on AUB publications. Where there are two figures cited for the same year there were discrepancies between sources. Presumably, the lower figures are for students at the university, while the higher one includes those enrolled in preparatory schools.
5. Statistics in this column come from the following sources: 1913, 'Some Excerpt from "A Brief History of the Baha'i Students of the American University of Beirut (by Z. N.

Zeine)', in *Program of the weekly meeting of the Baha'i students at Beirut, Syria, 1930-1931*; 1914, 'Az taraf-i talāmaza-yi bahā'i-yi Bairūt', *Najm-i Bākhtar*, 5:5: 4-6; 1924, photograph 1547, Audio-Visual Department, Baha'i World Centre; 1925, *Baha'i Year Book*, 1: 104; 1926, photograph 4935-65, Audio-Visual Department, Baha'i World Centre; 1927, Zeine, 'A Brief History'; 1929, *Program of the weekly meeting of the Baha'i students at Beirut, Syria, 1929-1930* (n.p., n.d.).

APPENDIX B

BIRTHPLACES OF BAHĀ'Ī STUDENTS, 1906-30*

Iran		Near East		Europe	
Abadeh	5	Beirut	16	Stuttgart	1
Boshruhiyeh	1	Ghaza	2		
Hamadan	4	Haifa/Akka	9		
Isfahan	3	Iskandarun	2		
Kashan	1	Mosul	2		
Kermanshah	6	Egypt	4		
Qazvin	1				
Qom	1				
Rasht	2				
Sabzevar	1				
Shiraz	9				
Tabriz	2				
Teheran	12				
Total:	48	Total	35	Total	1

* I have compiled a list of 122 Baha'i students who were educated in Beirut between 1906 and 1939, but could not identify the birthplaces for all of them. The sources from which this data were compiled are: *Who's Who; The Program of the Society of Baha'i Students of Beirut, 1929-1930; The Program of the weekly meeting of the Baha'i Students of Beirut, Syria, 1930-31; International Baha'i Bureau Bulletin*, 20 October 1930; *Star of the West*, vol. 10, no. 11, p. 218; *Khāfirāt-i nuh sālah*, p. 503; *Abdul Baha in Egypt*, pp. 271, 329; *Baha'i News*, no. 3, p. 3; *Star of the West*, vol. 10, no. 11, p. 218; *Baha'i World*, vol. 14, pp. 368-71; *Baha'i World*, vol. 15, p. 545; Diary-Letter from Shoghi Effendi dated 29-31 July 1919, Albert Vail Papers, Baha'i National Archives; and notes on group photographs of the students held by the Audio-Visual Department of the Baha'i World Centre (photograph numbers 4748-85; 4377-16; 7030; 4932-44, 4377-15, 1547, 5129-36).

An Iranian in First World War Beirut: Qasem Ghani's Reminiscences

H. E. Chehabi

Qasem Ghani (Qāsim Ghanī) was born in 1893 in the town of Sabzevar, in Iran's northeastern Khorasan province. An astute observer of the world around him, he rarely accepted positions in government, and then only for short periods. He travelled a lot and wrote copiously; his memoirs, diaries and letters fill 12 volumes. The first volume of his collected works contains an account of his early life that includes his childhood and adolescence in Iran as well as his five-year stay in Beirut, which coincided with the First World War. His reminiscences of Beirut contain valuable information about the life of Iranian students at the Syrian Protestant College (as of 1920 American University of Beirut),¹ reveal a hitherto unknown facet of Ottoman–Persian relations during the Great War, and afford the reader an intimate glimpse of Ahmad Cemal Paşa (1872–1922), a member, with Enver Paşa and Talât Paşa, of the Ottoman Empire's ruling triumvirate in the last years of its existence, and, in his capacity of commander of the Fourth Army, effective ruler of Greater Syria during the war.²

Qasem Ghani spent the early years of his life in his native Sabzevar, and then

1. See also Chapter 4.

2. Arab nationalist historiography has drawn a very negative picture of the man, who is often given the epithet *saffāh* (the slaughterer). See, for instance, Naim Yafi, *Jamāl Bashā al-Saffāh: dirāsa fī al-shakhṣiyya wa al-tārīkh* (Latakia: Dār al-Hiwār, 1993). For his *apologia pro vita sua* see Djemal Pasha, *Memories of a Turkish Statesman 1913–1919* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1922), which, however, mentions none of the events narrated by Ghani. According to a German war memoir, Cemal Paşa opposed the Armenian policy of the Ottoman government and managed to prevent massacres in the areas under his command. Wilhelm Litten, *Persische Flitterwochen* (Berlin: Georg Stilke, 1925), pp. 315–16.

moved to Teheran to study at the Tarbiyat and Dar al-Fonun schools. Upon finishing the equivalent of high school, he decided to continue his studies in Beirut, as he had some family friends there. Besides, he recalls, 'in those days Beirut had a great reputation in Iran and was considered a centre of learning. A number of people had studied there, and books [published] there were read a lot in Teheran.'³

The journey from Teheran to Beirut was long and arduous. After leaving the Iranian capital, Ghani spent the summer of 1913 in his native Sabzevar, and at the end of the summer left for Ashkabat (in Persian: Eshq-Abad), which had a sizeable Iranian community and also a Baha'i one.⁴ From here he took a train to Krasnovodsk (today Türkmenbashi) by the Caspian Sea, which he crossed by ship to reach Baku, in today's Republic of Azerbaijan. From Baku he went by train to Batumi (today the capital of the Autonomous Republic of Ajaria in Georgia), from where he sailed to Istanbul, which was in an uproar over the recent assassination of the head of the government.⁵ As there were no ships sailing for Beirut for a quite a while, he went to Izmir, where he embarked on a Russian ship that carried mostly Jewish pilgrims to the Holy Land and that would call at many ports on the way, including Beirut.

In Beirut Ghani met Iranian friends. He writes that at the time there were many Iranian students in Lebanon, more than 200.⁶ Knowing French, he preferred to attend the Université Saint-Joseph, the French Jesuit institution founded in 1875, rather than the Syrian Protestant College. He decided to study medicine rather than the humanities, for he argued that he could satisfy his interest for the latter on his own while medical training could be obtained only in an institutional setting.⁷ After taking an examination he entered the pre-medical programme of the Université Saint-Joseph, whose teachers impressed him: 'The Jesuits are very learned men who spend all their lives studying, and who are also spiritual and good people. Of course they do not have full freedom to teach in literature and the rational sciences (*olūm-i ma'qul*), as philosophy, thought and the pen are [for them] dependent on religion.'⁸

3. *Yāddāshthā-yi Duktur Qāsim-i Ghanī*, vol. 1 (London: Ithaca Press, 1980), p. 75.

4. M. Momen, 'The Baha'i Community of Ashkabat: its Social Basis and Importance in Baha'i History', in Shirin Akiner, ed., *Cultural Change and Continuity in Central Asia* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1991), pp. 278–305.

5. This was Mahmut Şevket Paşa, who was killed on 11 June 1913. For the effects of this assassination on Ottoman politics, see Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), p. 115.

6. *Yāddāshthā-yi Duktur Qāsim-i Ghanī*, vol. 1, p. 101.

7. Beirut was a well respected medical centre at the time. See Nigarendé, 'Beyrouth, centre médical', *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 7: 1–2 (1909).

8. *Yāddāshthā-yi Duktur Qāsim-i Ghanī*, vol. 1, p. 102.

Père Pascal, the director of the pre-medical school, also taught astronomy on Saturday mornings. On Sundays the students were encouraged to attend church and, on one occasion, Père Pascal spoke about Christ's ascension. Ghani was confused. He approached his teacher and asked: '*Mon père*, last Saturday you taught us Newton's laws of gravity and I accepted your mathematical and physical reasoning. But then you told us in church that the corpse of a man weighing perhaps 70 or 80 kilos rose and ascended to heaven. Which of these laws should I accept?'⁹ Père Pascal told him that he believed in both, and felt as if his brain had two distinct parts, each containing one set of beliefs. Ghani continues:

I learnt a lot at the school of the Jesuits. They had a well thought-out curriculum. ... I studied long hours [to make up for the gaps in my knowledge]. ... French literature, French history, psychology and astronomy were all new subjects that had been unknown to me in Teheran. In addition to these, those disciplines that were a preparation for medicine like botany, zoology, general life sciences, physics and chemistry were also new to me and aroused my appetite [for learning]. Soon I caught the attention of the class and the teachers, for I was a *talaba*¹⁰ in the true sense of the word.¹¹

About his living arrangements, Ghani writes:

Near the school, in Furn al-Shubbak, I rented a room in the house of a Druze, who also gave me breakfast. ... The room was dark and damp, but the landlord was very kind. The Druze are on the whole well disposed towards Iranians, and are by nature good people. They are a mysterious Muslim sect and count among the *ghulat*. ... At noon and in the evening we would eat in restaurants close by. In those days Beirut was very cheap and subsistence was easy and plentiful. In Pre-med School there was only one other Iranian, Mahmud Akbar, the son of Shaykh al-Eslam Esfahani, who was much older than I and had a wife and child in Isfahan and had come to Beirut to study medicine. He was a good fellow ... but failed to pass the entrance test for Medical School at the end of the year.¹²

According to Ghani, 116 students took the entrance test, 32 or 33 of whom passed, including he. He spent the summer of 1914 in cool summer quarters

9. Ibid., p. 103.

10. This term nowadays refers to seminarians, but here connotes one who seeks in-depth knowledge and is serious about its pursuit.

11. *Yāddāshthā-yi Duktur Qāsim-i Ghani*, vol. 1, p. 103.

12. Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 104–5.

(*yaylaq*) and also travelled to the cities of Palestine.¹³ By the time the academic year began war had broken out in Europe. In October Ottoman ships bombarded Russian coastal cities, prompting France, Great Britain and Russia to declare war on the Ottoman Empire (which had a few months earlier concluded a secret treaty of alliance with Germany) in early November. The Université Saint-Joseph, being French, was closed, its properties were confiscated and its staff were now enemy aliens:

In the autumn I entered ... the Université Saint-Joseph, excited about being a university student. ... I began my studies with a lot of enthusiasm and rented a room near the Faculté de Médecine, but after only three weeks the Ottoman [Empire], of which Lebanon was then a part, entered the First World War on the side of Germany, and naturally the French university was closed down. The French and the Jesuits went back to France, and I was left lost and clueless. Most of the Iranians resident in Beirut returned to Iran via Aleppo and Baghdad, some went elsewhere, but I was determined to stay in Beirut in whatever way and continue my studies, for I knew that if I went back to Iran, it would be very difficult to get to be sent abroad again.¹⁴

Before the war there had been some tension between the American Protestant and French Catholic missionaries, so it came as a surprise when the American college offered shelter to a number of the latter. Out of gratitude, the French teachers encouraged some 60 of their pupils to seek admission to the Syrian Protestant College.¹⁵ One of these pupils was Qasem Ghani:

The university at which I could study was the American University of Beirut,¹⁶ which had many schools, including a very famous Medical School that had very learned professors, hospitals, and other appendices, but the trouble was that teaching was done in English and I did not know any

13. Probably an allusion to Haifa, for Ghani associated with Baha'is then, his mother being of a Baha'i family (see also Chapter 4, p. 107 n46). It is noteworthy that Ghani's stay in Beirut coincided with that of Shoghi Effendi, but Ghani never mentions him in his diary. For an account of the latter's years in Beirut, see Riaz Khadem, *Shoghi Effendi in Oxford and Earlier* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1999), pp. 7–15.

14. *Yāddāshthā-yi Duktur Qāsim-i Ghani*, vol. 1, pp. 106–7.

15. Stephen B. L. Penrose, Jr., *That They May Have Life: The Story of the American University of Beirut 1866–1941* (New York: The Trustees of the American University of New York, 1941, distributed by Princeton University Press), p. 150. The author was president of AUB from 1948 to 1954.

16. In his writings, Ghani consistently refers to his *alma mater* by its later name.

English. For a week I was despondent ... but then with the help [of two friends] I went to AUB and had a meeting with Dr Howard Bliss, the president of the school, who knew good French, and talked with him about my problem.¹⁷

Howard Bliss told Ghani that since he had passed the entrance examination for the Université Saint-Joseph, he was also qualified to study at the college, but he would have to learn English first. Since there were many students in Ghani's situation, the college set up special language classes in the autumn of 1914, and Ghani left his room to join three other Iranians in a house near the college campus in Ras Beirut that was owned by a Beirut grocer named Georges, who lived with his family on its lower floor. The general situation gradually deteriorated:

In the first weeks of the [new academic] year we ate in restaurants near AUB, because in the beginning of the Ottomans' entry into the war there were no shortages, ... but gradually [the situation] became more difficult since Germany needed to meet some of its agricultural and food needs from the Ottomans. Fear gripped everyone and everybody started stocking up on foodstuffs, including an Iranian merchant by the name of Hajj Mohammad Yazdi, a very honourable and good man who lived in Beirut with his family. Since the coast was dangerous, in the sense that [people] surmised that it might come under attack by French and English warships,¹⁸ all those who could left for the interior of Lebanon and Syria, including Hajj Mohammad, who took his family to Damascus.¹⁹

Before he left, this merchant sold the foodstuffs he had stocked to the four Iranian students at a fair price. They decided that it would be unwise to hire a domestic servant to cook for them, for such a person would probably abscond with the victuals, given the general scarcity. Therefore, they decided to cook for themselves and went to the market to buy aluminium pots and pans, an oil stove

17. *Yāddāshthā-yi Duktur Qāsim-i Ghani*, vol. 1, pp. 107–8.

18. On 24 February 1912 two Italian ships had bombarded Beirut and killed about forty people, Italy having declared war on the Ottoman Empire in the autumn of 1911 to conquer Libya. From then on the inhabitants of the coastal areas lived in fear of an Allied attack. For a discussion of the attack, see Timothy W. Childs, *Italian Turkish Diplomacy and the War over Libya 1911–1912* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), pp. 121–3; for the war itself see Rachel Simon, *Libya between Ottomanism and Nationalism: The Ottoman Involvement in Libya during the War with Italy (1911–1919)* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1987).

19. *Yāddāshthā-yi Duktur Qāsim-i Ghani*, vol. 1, p. 111.

plus cutlery and dishes. From Enayatollah Chayforush, an Iranian coffee house owner, they purchased a big white samovar. They divided the work among themselves. A typical meal consisted of a stew made of meat, potatoes, onions, tomatoes and green beans. The war did not prevent them from having a reasonably good time:

On Saturday afternoons, when classes ended, we used to light the big samovar, and some other students, who were not our housemates, came to visit us for tea. On Sundays we would cook rice, and sometimes we would prepare food and take it with us on excursions to the foothills of Mount Lebanon. If anyone asked me about the most delicious and most wholesome meals I have had in my life, I would answer without hesitation that it was those we prepared ourselves that year. There were no limits to our joy, happiness and cheerfulness. ... We were like four united brothers who loved each other. We had a few Persian books like the collected works of Sa'di and the Divan of Hafiz, and on holidays, especially in the summer, we read them together. My friends were all from Shiraz, and all the literary works we had were by Shirazi poets ... they always teased Khorasanis about this ... and I was helpless, since I had no works by any Khorasani masters.²⁰

It so happened that one day Ghani went from school to the market in the centre of the town and, on the way, passed the shop of one Hajj Qasem of Tabriz, a man who owned a second-hand goods store and had been a resident of Beirut for years. In this store a big book caught Ghani's eye, a book that turned out to be a tattered copy of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings) that had been printed in Bombay and that a pilgrim returning from Mecca had sold to the merchant. Ghani offered him all the money he had, a French *livre d'or*, and Hajj Qasem accepted. He then took it to a bookbinder and had it bound for a silver *majidiyya* (a fifth of an Ottoman gold lira), having had to borrow that amount from the college, which was then still lending money to its students. From then on Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* was included in the group readings.

After the first year of war, the supply situation in Syria deteriorated:

Before long food shortages occurred in Beirut, as the state confiscated everything. The great Turkish empire was embroiled in war from one end to the other, and its sea lanes had been cut off. ... The Ottoman government opened a front for an attack on Egypt under the supreme command of Cemal Paşa. ... Day by day the consequences of the war became more

20. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

visible, and people were overcome by fear. A number of merchants, especially Christians and Jews, began hoarding and sucking people's blood, and most of them were protected by Turkish officials whose secret associates they were. Bread was rationed and everyone received one loaf a day. Sugar and tea were unobtainable. It was a dark time.

The 'dark time' to which Ghani refers is the great famine of 1915–18, which killed about half a million people in Greater Syria. It was caused by the confluence of a number of factors: the Entente powers' total blockade of the Syrian coast, the inadequacy of the Ottoman supply strategy, inadequate harvests and bad weather, diversion of supplies from Syria as a result of the Arab revolt further south, the speculative activities of some local grain merchants, the unhelpfulness of German military officials in Syria, and widespread hoarding by the population itself.²¹ By the second half of 1915, penury started affecting the coastal areas. Prices shot up, but the Iranians in Beirut were cut off from Iran:

Our correspondence with Iran became difficult because every day a new state would enter the war, [complicating communications]. Banking relations [with Iran] were cut because the banks of Beirut had no direct dealings with Iran. Egypt was in British hands, Baghdad was being fought over ... all of which added to our problems. Sometimes [our relations] would take some money to the US legation in Teheran, and the Americans would convey it to us through their embassy in Istanbul. But when the United States entered the war against Germany in [1917], their ambassador in Istanbul was recalled.

The upshot is that by 1915 our food reserves at home were all used up, and the sort of things we bought on the free market like fruit, milk, yoghurt, vegetables and *halva* were scarce and difficult to find. For this reason we left our own home and became boarders at AUB. The Russian banks through which I had been sent money via Khorasan and Eshq-Abad had ceased dealing with Beirut, and after the war I learned that much of my money had disappeared in these banks. British banks had no dealings with

the Ottomans, the American embassy in Istanbul closed down and we [Iranians] had no consul in Beirut. The affairs of the Iranian consulate were officially handled by the Austrian consul who apparently was an opium and morphine addict, but in reality they were carried out by Dr Alikhan Farahmandi, a graduate of the French Medical School. ... The family of Mo'ezz al-Soltan Hesabi, namely his wife and two sons, Dr Mohammad Hesabi and Dr Mahmud Hesabi,²² were studying in Beirut and lived in the [Iranian] consulate.

The American University of Beirut, on which we had now become a burden, lent all of us money, and in return we signed promissory notes billed in dollars, to be paid after the war. The school was very thrifty. Of course we lived in the school and ate there. [But we were still charged] fees, and they tried to save on such other expenses as laundry, clothing and pocket money. That is why we were in dire straits and had to live frugally. ... For four years there was no sugar, and we drank our tea and coffee bitter.

²³

The very frugality of our lives was an impetus for us to study harder, and I was always among the best. ... The food at school was not very good, but there was no excuse to complain because the university did all it could. In those difficult times of hardship and scarcity, when the Turkish government looked upon Americans with hostility, [the college] had to supply the needs of about 5000 people: roughly 1000 students, 500 employees, [the occupants of] 2000 hospital beds in and outside Beirut, and the members of over 200 American families of the professors, teachers and physicians, which is why we were grateful. We spent 1915 in this way at school, and derived happiness from the progress of our studies, [which caused us to have] an ordered spiritual life [in spite of] the difficulties of the war.

Both the United States and Iran were neutral in the early years of the First World War, which helped both the college and Ghani. By their rectitude and willingness to extend medical help to the Ottoman war casualties,²⁴ the adminis-

21. L. Schatkowski Schilcher, 'The Famine of 1915–1918 in Greater Syria', in John P. Spagnolo, ed., *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective* (Reading: Ithaca Press for the Middle East Centre of Saint Antony's College, Oxford, 1992), p. 234. For a Turkish testimony, see *Memoirs of Halid Edib* (New York: The Century Co., 1926), pp. 401–61, *passim*. See also Najwa al-Qattan, 'Safarbarlik: Ottoman Syria and the Great War', in Thomas Philipp and Christoph Schumann, eds, *From the Syrian Land to the States of Syria and Lebanon* (Beirut: Orient-Institut der DMG, 2004), pp. 163–73.

22. Mahmud Hesabi went on to become a famous scientist in Iran. See Chapter 1, p. 18.

23. For other contemporary accounts of how the college coped with the famine see Penrose, *That They May Have Life*, pp. 157–65 and Bayard Dodge, *The American University of Beirut: A Brief History of the University and the lands which it serves* (Beirut: Khayat's, 1958), pp. 45–7. Dodge, a son-in-law of Howard Bliss, was the president of AUB from 1923 to 1948.

24. Many decades later, during the Lebanese civil war, the medical staff of AUB would again do its best to alleviate the pain. See Gladys Mouro, *An American Nurse amidst Chaos* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1999).

trators of the college had won the trust of Cemal Paşa, who did all he could to alleviate their difficulties, even allowing the medical school's Canadian doctors, who as British subjects were enemy aliens, to remain in Beirut.²⁵ The United States entered the war in 1917 but did not declare war on the Ottoman Empire,²⁶ although diplomatic relations were broken. The absence of a state of war between the United States and the Ottoman Empire allowed Cemal Paşa to keep the college and its indispensable medical school open. Iran's situation was less clear. Both alliances in the war put pressure on the government to join their side and, what made matters worse, the authority of the central government in Teheran was crumbling. In 1915 a number of Iranian members of parliament and political leaders left the capital for Kermanshah, close to the border of Ottoman Iraq, and established a pro-Axis provisional government that had to retreat to Istanbul when the British took Baghdad.²⁷ These diplomatic developments affected the lives of the Iranian residents of the Ottoman Empire:

In 1916 we experienced great anxiety. The Iranian ambassador to Istanbul, Ehtesham al-Saltaneh Alamir, had secretly negotiated with the Ottomans about the Iranian residents of the Empire, to the effect that those Iranians who could serve under arms be drafted into the Ottoman army. ...²⁸

[With the formation of the provisional government] the Ottomans could

25. See Penrose, *That They May Have Life*, pp. 153, 157, 159, 161, and 165; and Dodge, *The American University of Beirut*, pp. 40 and 43.

26. According to Stephen Penrose, the Bulgarian minister to Washington, Stepan Panaretoff, a graduate of Istanbul's Robert College (Boğaziçi University after 1971), prevailed on Cleveland H. Dodge, president of the board of trustees of that college, to travel to Washington to persuade President Woodrow Wilson, a personal friend of his, not to declare war on Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire so as to safeguard American institutions of higher learning (and future American influence) in the Middle East. *That They May Have Life*, pp. 162–3.

27. For eye-witness accounts, see Riḍa-ʿAlī Dīvānbaygī, *Safar-i muhājirat dar nakhustīn jang-i jahānī* (Teheran: n.p. 1973); Amān Allāh Ardalān, *Khātirāt-i Hājī ʿIzz al-Mamālīk Ardalān: Zindagī dar dawrān-i shish pādishāh*, Bāqir ʿĀqilī, ed. (Teheran: Nashr-i Nāmāk, 1994); and ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Shaybānī, Waḥid al-Mulk, *Khātirāt-i muhājirat: Az dawlat-i muvaqqat-i Kirmānshāh tā kumitih-yi milliyūn-i Birlan*, ʾIrāj Afshār and Kāvah Bayāt, eds (Teheran: Shirāzah, 1999).

28. Ehtesham al-Saltaneh was Iranian ambassador to the Porte from 1911 to 1919, but he only briefly mentions his mission in his memoirs: Sayyid Muḥammad Maḥdī Mūsavī, *Khātirāt-i Ihtishām al-Saltāna* (Teheran: Intishārāt-i Zavvār, 1987), pp. 714–24. These pages contain no reference to the drafting of Iranian expatriates, and the more detailed account of his Istanbul years that he announced in them has not been found. The memoirs cited in the previous footnote do not mention the matter either.

now argue that Iran's provisional government, which was not subject to pressure by Russia and Britain, and was therefore the real representative of the Iranian people, had allied itself with the Ottoman government, for which reason Iranians had to serve in the Ottoman army to defend the common interests of the two states. [There were rumours that the Ottomans had bribed the Iranian ambassador, but since a man is innocent until proven guilty we will not expand on these rumours.] ... The result was that the Ottomans, with their usual undisciplined and violent manner, rounded up thousands of Iranians, from the coasts of the Mediterranean to Khaneqayn [in Iraq] or Mount Ararat, or took money to grant them temporary exemption. No Iranian was safe, and since most of them were simple lower class people like burden carriers (*hammal*), shoe shiners, unemployed men, or vagabonds, they had neither the right connections to defend them nor the means to buy their own freedom.

In Beirut Azmi Beg, the Turkish governor (*vali*), had asked the Iranian consulate and AUB for a list of all Iranians. The school prevaricated. In the beginning the US ambassador in Istanbul had launched a protest in the name of the defence of small states, but a few months later, when diplomatic relations between the United States and the Ottoman Empire were severed, [there was no one left to protect us]. We Iranian students did not dare leave the campus, for fear of being drafted into the Ottoman army by the police. We were very worried ... and in spite of our impecunious circumstances sent daily telegrams to our ambassador in Istanbul, who would answer some of the telegrams in the formulaic way of our six thousand year old country: 'Serious measures will be taken,' 'Results will be announced soon,' and other empty phrases like that. ...²⁹

Then something unexpected happened that saved us, and deprived us of the honour of fighting in Ottoman ranks ...: one of the Ottoman pashas in Damascus, Asghar Paşa,³⁰ suddenly fell ill. A German military doctor and Fahreddin Paşa, one of the best physicians of Istanbul, [misdiagnosed the patient's illness] and ended up giving up on him. At that time Ahmad Cemal Paşa was the absolute ruler of these parts, and he was a close friend of Asghar Paşa. It was suggested to him that Dr Harris Graham, a Professor of Internal Medicine at AUB who had a lot of experience in treating the illnesses of the region, be consulted. Cemal Paşa had orders from Enver Paşa,

29. According to Divanbaygi, this ambassador did not do anything except *softehbazi* (financial wheeling and dealing), and acted in a way unbecoming to an ambassador. Dīvānbaygī, *Safar-i muhājirat*, p. 95.

30. Ghani is probably referring to the commander of the Eighth Corps, Mersinli Küçük Cemal Paşa, whose name translates as 'the younger (Arabic: *asghar*) Cemal Paşa.'

the Ottoman minister of war, to make life difficult for the Americans in Beirut in every way he could, especially reducing their supplies, so that they would have no choice but to close their school and leave Beirut, without the Ottomans closing down AUB officially. ... And now Cemal Paşa found himself in a situation where he had to turn to Dr Graham for help.

... Cemal Paşa sent a telegram to the late Howard Bliss, president of AUB, requesting that Professor Graham go to Damascus immediately. He sent another telegram to Azmi Beg, the *vali* of Beirut, ordering him to put a car at Graham's disposal. Graham left at once, and upon arriving in Damascus examined the patient, concluding that he was suffering from life-threatening malaria. Asghar Paşa's two physicians started arguing with Graham, and the German doctor asked pointedly whether Graham thought him incapable of diagnosing malaria. Graham answered that of course he was capable of diagnosing the illness, but that he had probably never encountered this type of malaria. Cemal Paşa, who was present, reminded the two local physicians that they had given up on the patient, and asked them to leave Graham a free hand in treating Asghar Paşa. Graham injected the patient with 25 cc of quinine and some fortifiers, repeated the injections after a few hours ... and saved the patient in the two days he stayed. For Cemal Paşa this curing seemed like a miracle, and he likened Graham to Jesus Christ. This incident caused Cemal Paşa completely to change his mind about the Americans and their university. In the face of Enver Paşa's strict orders he began defending them, ... [arguing] that hundreds of physicians trained at AUB were caring for Ottoman troops. Graham returned to his teaching and his hospital, and we students did not know where he had been. ...

A few days later, Cemal Paşa, who was constantly on the move in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, came to Beirut. Around eleven o'clock in the morning I saw Dr Bliss, wearing official garb and a top hat, passing by in a hurry. When he saw me he called me and told me that he was on his way to see Cemal Paşa, and that he would speak to him about the difficulties of the Iranian students who were supposed to be drafted into the Ottoman army.³¹

When Bliss returned, however, he had bad news: Cemal Paşa was unmoved and argued that since the Iranian students had common interests with the Ottomans, they should be put in his care and that appropriate positions would be found for them on the various fronts. The president of AUB insisted they had to finish their studies first, and Cemal Paşa promised to think the matter over and give his final

opinion in the afternoon when he would visit AUB. Bliss instructed Ghani to find one of the older Iranian students and have him read a petition in the Turkish language asking for Iranian students to be exempt from military service when Cemal Paşa came to the president's house at five o'clock for tea. Ghani and his friends wrote the petition, Professor Harutunian, the college's Armenian teacher of Turkish,³² translated it into that language and an Iranian with a beautiful handwriting wrote it out in *nasta'liq* script. The petition stated that the Iranian students at the Syrian Protestant College were aware that the Ottoman government had entered the war to defend a legitimate and sacred cause, and that cause was the common cause of all Muslims, including Iranians. But the students requested that they be allowed to finish their studies first, so that they could serve that cause better.

Meanwhile, at the university Bliss, who was an accomplished orator, gave a welcoming speech for Cemal Paşa in which he said that while Americans and Turks were engaged in war, the conflict was over material interests only, adding that American and Ottoman science and knowledge were at peace, since truth, science and spirituality are one and the same in all countries. He concluded that Cemal Paşa had proven this point with his visit, and asked students to get up and bow to him to thank him for the unforgettable lesson he had given them. Cemal Paşa, visibly moved, replied in Turkish, saying:

Today is one of the happiest days of my life. I am a soldier and ... admit with the simplicity, directness and sincerity of a soldier that this institution is a cultural and spiritual institution that has been founded to serve humankind. It is an honour for me to add my name to the list of its servants. I hope that you students will be successful in spreading the light of science and knowledge in the East.³³

Cemal Paşa's speech was transcribed immediately in beautiful calligraphy, and Bliss asked him to sign it so that it could forever adorn the library. Bliss then made hundreds of copies of the document to use against any Ottoman official who might make trouble for the university. When the party retreated to the president's residence for tea, one of the older Iranian students gave Cemal Paşa the petition.

Cemal Paşa liked the calligraphy, composition and content [of the document], asked to see its bearer, took his hand, and while holding it told him: 'Go and on my behalf shake the hands of all Iranian students at this univer-

31. *Yāddāshthā-yi Duktur Qāsim-i Ghanī*, vol. 1, pp. 115–26.

32. Turkish had been made an obligatory subject in 1915. Penrose, *That They May Have Life*, p. 158.

33. *Yāddāshthā-yi Duktur Qāsim-i Ghanī*, vol. 1, pp. 131–2.

sity, and assure them that they are my spiritual children. I like the spirit of this petition very much, tell them that they can pursue their studies with full confidence and trust in me, and I hope they will be able to render great services in the future.' ... In sum, a correct diagnosis of Dr Graham and the magic of Dr Bliss's oratory saved us Iranians, a colony of 5000 people.³⁴

Bliss, for his part, briefly mentioned this episode in his annual report for 1916–17 where he wrote: '[Cemal Paşa] allowed our Persian students, summoned to military service, to remain undisturbed at the college.'³⁵

On 8 October 1918 a British division coming from the south occupied Beirut. The Allies distributed food and supplies, and put an end to a nightmare they themselves had helped create by their naval blockade of civilian supplies to the Syrian coast. In August 1919 Ghani graduated from medical school and returned to Iran via Istanbul, where he paid a courtesy call on the Iranian ambassador, who changed the subject when Ghani told him how his American professors had succeeded where he had failed.

Ghani devotes another fifty or so pages of the first volume of his memoirs to his professors and teachers at the college, all of whom he remembers with fondness and admiration. One in particular, Dr William van Dyck, was instrumental in helping him overcome a deep personal and health crisis in 1917. The account of his return trip through the various occupation zones of the Ottoman Empire is itself interesting, though not relevant to the present book.

In Iran Ghani had a distinguished career as educator and member of parliament until, in September 1947, he was named ambassador to Egypt, a position he held until February 1949.³⁶ He left a detailed account of his mission, an account that includes observations on Lebanon and the Lebanese made when he stopped in Beirut en route to Cairo. This was Ghani's first trip back since his days at the SPC, and he stayed from 30 September to 12 October 1947. He was wined and dined by Beirut's cosmopolitan set in Beirut, Bhamdoun, Sofar, and Aley, and, although he did not like the loose morals of the people he encountered, he found that 'the people of Lebanon are very beautiful, both men and women. It reminds one of

34. Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 132–3.

35. 'Fifty First Annual Report of the Syrian Protestant College 1916–1917', manuscript, p. 4.

36. Ghani had already visited Egypt before the war as a member of the Iranian delegation, led by the prime minister, that took presents to the Iranian crown prince's fiancée, Princess Fawzia. On that occasion members of the delegation had 'expressed warm appreciation of what American education [was] doing for their country.' 'Report of the President of the American University of Beirut for the Seventy-Seventh Year 1937–1938', typescript, p. 38.

America, beauty is nothing special [in Lebanon]; everybody is beautiful.'³⁷ After giving a day-by-day account of his comings and goings, he summarizes his impressions:

On the whole, what I gathered from [my stay] in Beirut, is that the bad and harmful influence of French education is noticeable among the people of Lebanon, especially among the rich and the merchants (in particular among the Christians). They have adopted the French taste for dancing, superficiality, frivolity, hedonism and amusement, while the good traits and virtues of the Arabs and Orientals have disappeared. The Christians sneer at the Arab League. With astonishing pride they claim that Lebanon is superior to other Arab countries in civilization, literacy and education. They consider themselves to be Aryans and go through a thousand pains to prove that the ancient Phoenicians were Aryans and not Semites.³⁸ The Arabic language has almost disappeared from among the rich. They speak French like their mother tongue, especially in the presence of foreigners and recent arrivals, as though they were ashamed of their own language. Women, who are prone to ostentation, ... constantly talk about Lamartine, Alfred de Musset, and Victor Hugo and these sort of average people, and do not utter one word about Abu al-Ala Mu'irri and Mutanabbi and others like these venerable figures, who compare to the French writers as the pure world compares to dirt. Many of these women say that the Arabic language is difficult, and ask what its use is. ... Really, wherever the French went in the East, they poisoned people's souls. The [Lebanese] sneer at the United States. Everywhere there is embezzlement, bribery and bribe taking. Elections are corrupt and votes are bought with money. Emile Eddé is a lackey of the French. Today Bechara El-Khoury is a lackey of the British. The different sects do not get along. The form religion takes is bad, and it is mixed with superstition. On the whole I did not like it. Lebanon is very expensive. The hotels are more expensive than those of New York. For indulging in carnal vices, Beirut and Lebanon are a good place.³⁹

After Egypt, Ghani was sent as ambassador to Turkey, but when the hoped-for nomination as ambassador to the United States did not materialize, he resigned from the foreign service and moved to San Francisco, where he died in 1952.

37. *Yāddāshthā-yi Duktur Qāsim-i Ghani*, vol. 8 (London: Ithaca Press, 1982), pp. 4–5.

38. Ghani is probably projecting secular Iranians' 'Aryan' (namely non-Arab) predilections on the Christian Lebanese he met.

39. *Yāddāshthā-yi Duktur Qāsim-i Ghani*, vol. 8, pp. 9–10.

Part II

Pahlavi Iran and the First Republic

Musa Sadr and Iran

H. E. Chehabi and Majid Tafreshi

If there is one figure that epitomizes Lebanese–Iranian relations in the twentieth century, that figure is Imam Musa Sadr. Musa Sadr left Iran for Lebanon in late 1959 and stayed in that country until 1978, when he disappeared while visiting Libya. His charismatic leadership of Lebanon's Shi'a during these 19 years has been analysed in great detail, for it was the harbinger of the Shi'a's emergence as a major political force in Lebanon.¹ But his activities in Iran and, after he had settled in Lebanon, in relation to Iran, have received almost no scholarly attention, which is all the more regrettable because it was as a result of the role he played in the Islamic resurgence in Iran that the young cleric caught the eyes of the Lebanese ulema who invited him to move to Lebanon. Moreover, the contacts he maintained with Iranian oppositionists in the 1970s help us understand the subsequent Lebanon policies of the Islamic Republic. In this chapter we aim to fill that lacuna.

EARLY YEARS IN QOM

Seyyed Musa Sadr was born in the spring of 1928 in the Cheharmardan neighbourhood of Qom,² a part of the shrine city in which many clerical families

1. See Jean Aucagne, 'L'Imam Moussa Sadr et la communauté chiite', *Travaux et Jours* 53 (October–December 1974); Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); Muṣṭafā Juhā, *Sajīn al-saḥrā': Al-fārāmīlī Mūsā al-Ṣadr* (Beirut: n.p., 1988); Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community* (Boulder: Westview, 1992); and Augustus Richard Norton, 'Musa al-Sadr', in Ali Rahnema, ed., *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (London: Zed Books, 1994). For a short sketch of his life see Augustus Richard Norton, 'Sadr, Musa al-', *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, vol. 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 453–7.
2. One source reports that he was born in Mashhad. Mugh, 'Tawḍīḥātī pīrāmūn-i zindagī va nāpadīd shudan-i Mūsā Ṣadr', *Ilm va Jāmi'a*, 7:42 (February–March 1986): 42–50.

live.³ He came from a long line of distinguished clerics tracing back their ancestry to Jabal 'Amil.⁴ His great-great-grandfather, S. Salih b. Muhammad Sharafeddin, a high-ranking cleric, was born in Shahrur, a village near Tyre (Sur). Following an anti-Ottoman riot in which two of his sons were killed,⁵ he left for the relative safety of Najaf, where he was later joined by his wife and two sons, Sadreddin and Muhammad Ali.⁶ Sadreddin married a daughter of Shaykh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita, the most important *mujtahid* of his age.⁷ A few years later, this Sadreddin left Najaf for Isfahan, which was then the most important centre of religious learning in Iran, but returned to Najaf shortly before his death, which occurred in January 1847.⁸ His five sons all became ulema, and the youngest of these, Isma'il, was born in Isfahan in 1258/1842.⁹ Isma'il was more serious in his studies than his brothers, and so he returned to Najaf in 1281/1864–5 to further his education. Here he became one of the important students of Mirza Mohammad Hasan Shirazi, who led the struggle against the 1891 tobacco concession in Iran.¹⁰ He rose to become a

The pseudonymous author claims to know the Sadr family intimately.

3. See Roy Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran* (New York: Pentheon Books, 1985), pp. 24–34 for an evocation of this neighbourhood. For an in-depth study of Qom see Marcel Bazin, 'Qom, ville de pèlerinage et centre régional', *Revue Géographique de l'Est*, 13:1–2 (1973): 77–136.
4. See Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*, pp. 33–4.
5. This was during the governorship of Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar, the ruthless Ottoman governor and a Bosnian by birth, who ruled Syria from 1780 to 1804. See Stanford J. Shaw, editor and translator, *Ottoman Egypt in the Eighteenth Century: The Nizāmnāme-i Mısır of Cezzār Ahmed Pasha* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 6–8. For a brief history of what his rule meant for the Shi'is of what is now southern Lebanon, see Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*, pp. 52–6.
6. Hādī Khusrawshāhī, 'Imām Musā Šadr: Khurshīdī hamchunān dirakhshān', in Hādī Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Musā Šadr* (=Vizahnāmah No. 5, *Tārīkh va Farhang-i mu'āšir*) (Qom: Markaz-i Barrasīhā-yi Islāmī, 1375/1997), pp. 10–11, gives the date as 1197 AH (AD 1783).
7. Muḥammad Sharīf Rāzī, *Ganjīnah-yi danishmandān*.
8. *Lughatnāmah-yi Dihkhudā*, vol. 32, p. 168, quoting Rawḍat al-Jinnāt, p. 333.
9. Khusrawshāhī, 'Imām Mūsā Šadr', pp. 10–11. The date is given as 1216 AHS (1837) by 'Abd al-Raḥīm Abādharī, *Imām Mūsā Šadr: Umīd-i maḥrūmān* (Teheran: Sāzīmān-i Tablīghāt-i Islāmī, 1374/1995), p. 22.
10. On the tobacco rebellion see Nikki R. Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891–1892* (London: Frank Cass, 1966) and Michael Glünz, 'Das Vorspiel zur Revolution: Das iranische Tabakboykott von 1891/92 und der historische Kontext des Rauchens in Iran', in Thomas Hengartner and Christoph Maria Merki, eds, *Tabakfragen: Rauchen aus kulturwissenschaftlicher Sicht* (Zurich: Chronos, 1996), pp. 139–50.

leading *mujtahid* in Iraq, and died in early 1919.¹¹ His second son, Sadreddin, born in Kazimayn in 1299/1881–2, moved to Mashhad in Iran upon the death of his father and married a daughter of Ayatollah Hosein Tabataba'i Qomi, the most important *mujtahid* of Khorasan and later for a short time the sole *marja'* for Iran.¹² When Ayatollah Abdolkarim Haeri Yazdi (1859–1937) established the *hawza* in Qom, he invited Sadreddin Sadr to join him.¹³ Sadreddin Sadr accepted, and became in fact Haeri's right-hand man. Haeri died in early 1937 and in the difficult years between his death and the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941, years in which the state's anti-clericalism reached new heights and aimed at closing down the *hawza* by making it ever more difficult for young men to study there, Sadreddin Sadr in fact became one of the members of a clerical triumvirate that led the *hawza*.¹⁴ It remained in control of Qom's religious establishment until Ayatollah Hosein Borujerdi moved to the city in early 1945 at the invitation of the younger clerics, among them Ruhollah Khomeini. Sadr, who was a *marja'* at that point, abdicated his position as imam of the shrine in deference to Borujerdi, who valued Sadreddin Sadr as a close friend and adviser.¹⁵ Sadreddin Sadr had seven daughters and three sons, including Musa Sadr.

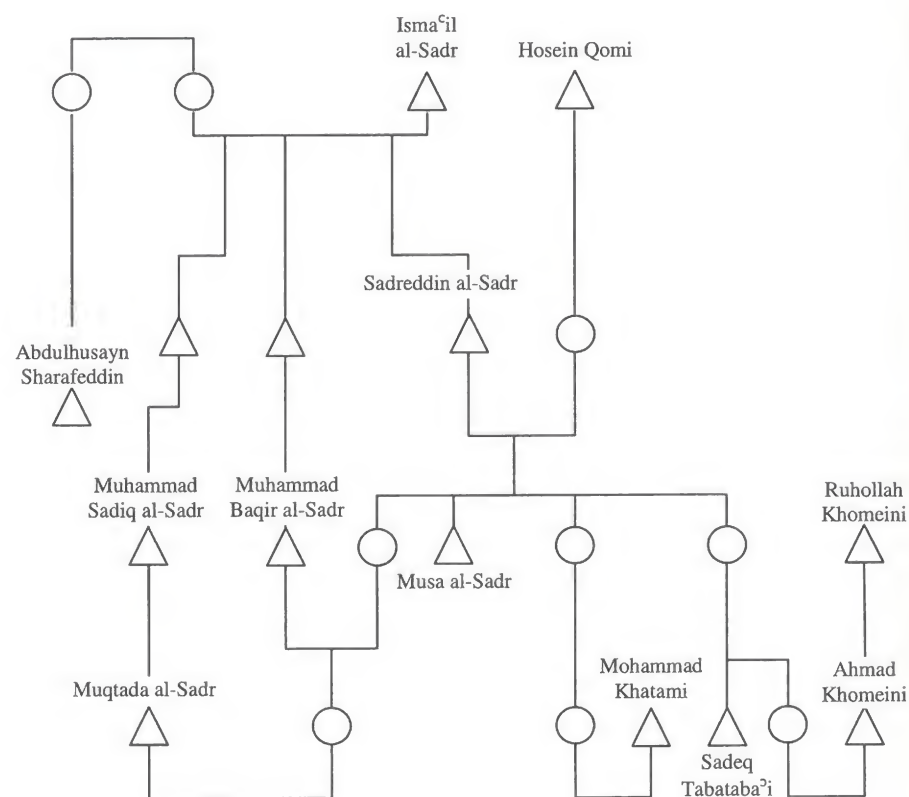
Musa Sadr's complex family ties, spanning three countries, are presented in Figure 6.1. They show that Sadr was related to many prominent ulema and thus exemplified the Shi'i cosmopolitanism that blurred the lines between Arab, Persian, and Turk, and that had Najaf in Iraq as its centre.¹⁶

One feature that distinguished Musa Sadr from earlier ulema was that he received both a secular state education and a classic Islamic one. When he was seven years old his father enrolled him in Qom's Hayat elementary school. But as the scion of a clerical family, Seyyed Musa also attended classes in the seminaries informally, before beginning his formal education at the *hawza* in 1941, the year it revived on Reza Shah's departure. On 11 Ziqada 1362 (9 November 1943), the

11. Biographical data are taken from Muḥammad-'Alī Tabrīzī, *Rayḥānat al-adab fī tarājīm al-ma'rūfīn bi l'kunya aw al-laḡab*, vol. 2 (Teheran: 'Ilmī, 1327/1948), pp. 461–2. For a discussion of his character see Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*, pp. 33–4.
12. Abādharī, *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, pp. 24–6.
13. For Sadreddin Sadr's scholarly and literary accomplishments see Tabrīzī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 2, pp. 465–6.
14. See 'Alī Davānī, 'Imām Mūsā Šadr dar Īrān va Lubnān', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, pp. 197–8 for details of the division of labour between the three.
15. Alī Davānī, *Zindagānī-yi za'īm-i buzurg-i 'ālam-i tashayyu' Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī*, revised edition (Teheran: Nashr-i Muṭaḥhar, 1993), pp. 116–20.
16. Chibli Mallat, *The Renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf, and the Shi'i International* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

birthday of Imam Reza, he was received into the ranks of the clergy at a ceremony in the house of his father, with the later Ayatollah Khomeini among the guests.¹⁷

FIGURE 6.1



Many of his teachers considered him a quick learner and remarkably knowledgeable for his young age.¹⁸ Recent accounts have tried to present a harmonious picture of Musa Sadr's relations with Ayatollah Borujerdi, but it seems in fact that

17. Abādhari, *Imām Mūsā Ṣadr*, pp. 31, 38–41, 46.

18. In Qom he studied with Ayatollah Alavi Esfahani, Ayatollah Mohaqqueq-e Damad, S. Reza Sadr (his older brother), Ayatollah S. Ahmad Khonsari, Ayatollah Hojjat Kuhkamareh'i, Ayatollah Hosein Ali Montazeri, Ayatollah Sadreddin Sadr (his father), Ayatollah Khomeini, Allameh Tabataba'i, and Ayatollah Borujerdi.

relations between the two families were not particularly good, and Musa's brother Reza was in fact squarely against Borujerdi.¹⁹ After a few years Musa Sadr began to teach lower-level courses to other students.²⁰ Many considered him the most outstanding seminarian of Qom and some thought he was destined to become a *marja'*.²¹

Musa Sadr's years as a seminarian in Qom coincided with a liberalizing of Iranian politics, which culminated in the nationalist movement that brought Mohammad Mosaddeq to the prime ministership in 1951.²² The ulama were not immune to the passions and excitements the political struggles of these years generated and, to rein them in, in 1949 Ayatollah Borujerdi issued an order to the Shi'i ulama to stay out of politics.²³ But a few became active nonetheless, either as individuals, such as Ayatollah Abolqasem Kashani,²⁴ or by forming associations, such as the Fada'iyan-e Eslam (Devotees of Islam), a group founded by S. Mojtaba Mirlowhi, better known under his *nom de guerre* Navvab Safavi.²⁵ The Fada'iyan had a radical populist programme and assassinated a number of statesmen and intellectuals, whom they accused of being foreign agents and/or enemies of Islam.²⁶ They were critical of the *hawza's* quietism and sometimes brought teaching to a standstill by disrupting classes, even going so far as to abuse Ayatollah

19. Personal communication from a friend of the family.

20. Abādhari, *Imām Mūsā Ṣadr*, p. 42.

21. Āyat Allāh Muḥammad Bāqir Sulṭānī Ṭabāṭabā'i, 'Imām Mūsā, Shāyistah-yi Marja'iyat', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Ṣadr*, pp. 51–3. The author was the husband of Musa Sadr's sister and his teacher.

22. On these years see Fakhreddin Azimi, *Iran: The Crisis of Democracy 1941–1953* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1989).

23. Majid Yazdi, 'Patterns of Clerical Political Behaviour in Postwar Iran, 1941–53', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 26 (July 1990).

24. Kashani first sided with Mosaddeq, then parted ways with him in 1952. See Yann Richard, 'Ayatollah Kashani: Precursor of the Islamic Republic?', in Nikki R. Keddie, ed., *Religion and Politics in Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

25. On the Fada'iyan-e Eslam see Adele Ferdows, 'Religion in Iranian Nationalism: the Study of Fadayān-i Islam' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Indiana, 1967); Farhad Kazemi, 'The Fada'iyan-e Islam: Fanaticism, Politics, and Terror', in Said Amir Arjomand, ed., *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam* (London: Macmillan Press, 1984); and Yann Richard, 'L'organisation des fedā'iyan-e eslām, mouvement intégriste musulman en Iran (1945–1956)', in Olivier Carré and Paul Dumont, eds., *Radicalismes Islamiques*, vol. 1, *Iran, Liban, Turquie* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985).

26. For a frank, informative and unrepentant account of their terrorist activities, including the assassination of Ahmad Kasravi, see the reminiscences of one of their high-ranking members, Mehdi 'Eraqi, in Maḥmūd Muqaddasī, Mas'ūd Dihshūr and Ḥamid Riḍā Shīrāzī, eds., *Nāguftahā: Khāṭirāt-i Shahīd Ḥājī Mahdī 'Irāqī* (Teheran: Rasā, 1991).

Borujerdi. Consequently, most clerics shunned them, most importantly Ayatollah Borujerdi himself, who is said to have refused interceding with the authorities on behalf of Navvab Safavi when he was caught and condemned to death;²⁷ he was executed in 1955. Ayatollah Sadreddin Sadr's house was one of the few places in which the Fada'iyan felt comfortable (Navvab Safavi considered him his *marja'*),²⁸ for the elder Sadr kept lines of communication open with everyone, including the Court, and exhorted all to be moderate in their actions. It would appear that Musa Sadr sympathized with the Fada'iyan for a while when he was in his early twenties,²⁹ but perhaps this was due more to common misgivings about Borujerdi's apolitical line.

The general climate of opinion among politically articulate Iranians was secular at the time, so most ulema felt politically and socially marginalized. Some younger members, among them Musa Sadr, concluded that only by familiarizing themselves with modern science and the contemporary world could the clerical class as a whole regain some influence in national life, and they concentrated on cultural work to counter the creeping secularization of society. Musa Sadr wanted to play a role in this endeavour and he decided that, to familiarize himself with the modern world, he had to get a full secular education in addition to his clerical training. At the time this was a bold step that very few seminarians took, for Iran's modern educational system had been set up in competition with the traditional ulema-dominated system and was therefore seen by traditionalists as spreading ungodly values to which young people ought not to be exposed.³⁰ Having already enjoyed a full secular primary and secondary education, he enrolled at the faculty of law of Teheran University, where he took a *lisāns* (licence, equivalent of a BA) and also learnt some English and French. Sadr's novel ideas influenced other young seminarians at Qom.

Musa Sadr's worldliness, reformist ideas and occasional eccentricities did not endear him to some in Qom's clerical establishment, but on the whole he remained very popular in the shrine city, for he was the very polite son of a widely loved senior cleric and a popular teacher of *sutuh*. It was customary for aspiring clerics to spend a few years in Najaf,³¹ but Musa Sadr would not leave so long as his father

27. For details on the Fada'iyan's relationship with the *hawza*, see Davānī, *Zindagānī*, pp. 368–82.

28. Personal communication from a family friend of the Sadrs, who heard it from Reza Sadr and others.

29. 'Muṣāḥaba bā Ḥujjat al-Islām va Muslimīn Muḥammad Vā'izzādah Khurāsānī', *Majalla-yi Hawza*, 8:1–2, nos 43/44 (1370/1991), pp. 227–9; and *Nāguftahā*, p. 137.

30. For the relationship between the two systems see Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 58–109.

31. On the seminaries of Najaf see Mohammed Fadhl Jamali, 'The Theological Colleges

was alive. When the elder Sadr died in late December 1953 the son decided to move, encouraged in his decision by Ayatollah Borujerdi³² who, perhaps, was happy to keep him at bay.

THE NAJAF YEARS

Musa Sadr arrived in Najaf in 1954. His teachers there were Ayatollah Muhsin Hakim, Shaykh Murtiza al Yasin, Shaykh (later Ayatollah) Abulqasim Khu'i, Shaykh Husayn Hilli, Shaykh Sadra Badkubah'i, and others,³³ some of whom went on to become major *marāji'* after Borujerdi's death. It was in Najaf that he became a *mujtahid*, although some claim that he had already become one by the time he went to Iraq, which would have made him an exceptionally young *mujtahid*.³⁴ In Najaf some teachers admired his intelligence, but, as in Qom, more traditional clerics disliked him for his interest in Western culture.³⁵

In 1955 Musa Sadr also took his first trip to Lebanon.³⁶ There he met Sayyid Abdulhusayn Sharafeddin, leader of South Lebanon's Shi'is, a distaff cousin of Musa Sadr's father (see Figure 6.1), who had been born in Iraq and had gone to Lebanon at the age of about thirty.³⁷ The two had met before, as Sharafeddin had visited Iran in 1936, on which occasion he had stayed with the Sadr family in Qom.³⁸ Although Sharafeddin was older than even Musa Sadr's father, his younger relative, whose energy, ideas and intellectual acumen he admired, impressed him.

In the spring of 1955 Musa Sadr returned to Iran, but in the autumn of 1956 he returned to Najaf. In that same year he also married a daughter of Ayatollah Shaykh Azizollah Khalili, who was the son of Mirza Hosein Khalil-e Tehrani, one of the three constitutionalist Najaf *marja'*s of the early twentieth century,³⁹ and the

of Najaf', in *Arabic and Islamic Garland: Historical, Educational and Literary Papers Presented to Abdul-Latif Tibawi by Colleagues, Friends and Students* (London: The Islamic Centre, 1977), pp. 135–40 and Fadil Jamali, 'The Theological Colleges of Najaf', *The Muslim World*, 50 (January 1960): 15–22.

32. Abādharī, *Imām Mūsā Ṣadr*, pp. 49–50.

33. Ibid., p. 51.

34. Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī, 'Maḥzar-i 'ilm va tavāḍu', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Ṣadr*, p. 118. Aḥmad Ādharī Qumī, 'Faḍl va kamāl, ijtihād va taqwā', in ibid., p. 123.

35. Abādharī, *Imām Mūsā Ṣadr*, pp. 64–5.

36. According to Ajami, his first trip was in the summer of 1957. *The Vanished Imam*, p. 45.

37. Tabrīzī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, pp. 308–10.

38. Abādharī, *Imām Mūsā Ṣadr*, p. 57n. The Sadrs and the Sharafeddins shared a common lineage.

39. Sayyid Mahdī Āqā'i, 'Sarāmadān-i ḥawza', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Ṣadr*, p. 275.

marriage resulted in four children. His years in Najaf were characterized by financial hardship, aggravated by the fact that his father was dead and could no longer support him. His financial problems would later contribute to his decision to move to Lebanon.

In late December 1957 Sharafeddin died and was buried in Najaf.⁴⁰ His death left a vacuum in Lebanon, and Shi'is there were at pains to find a successor to their leader. No consensus could be reached, however, and so an outsider seemed an ideal choice.⁴¹ Community leaders wrote a letter to Ayatollah Borujerdi requesting that he persuade Sadr to move to Lebanon. This was not the first time that a Shi'i community had asked Borujerdi to send a representative, but it was the first time that a specific person had been named in the request. More importantly, Sadr was invited to come as leader, not as a mere representative (*wakil*).

RETURN TO IRAN AND MAKTAB-E ESLAM

In 1958 a *coup d'état* overthrew the monarchy in Iraq and Musa Sadr had to leave. He returned to Iran in the summer of 1958, disappointed by the conservatism he encountered at the *hawza* in Najaf. In the twilight years of Ayatollah Borujerdi's leadership of the Shi'i world, the young *mujtahid* became associated with two projects that attempted to infuse the *hawza* of Qom with new dynamism.

The more important of the two was the monthly journal *Darsha'i az maktab-e Eslam* (Lessons from the School of Islam), usually referred to simply as *Maktab-e Eslam*.⁴² In 1957, when Musa Sadr was still in Najaf, a number of Azerbaijani merchants from Teheran approached Ayatollah S. Kazem Shari'atmadari, an Azeri himself and a *marja'*-in-waiting who was more open to the outside world than his peers, with the idea of funding a journal that would reach a new audience of educated Muslims and that would thwart the seductive influence of secular ideologies. The idea of the *hawza* having its own journal was truly revolutionary at the time. This was because the dominant quietism of the *hawza* frowned on any type of political engagement by ulema and seminarians to the point where even reading newspapers and magazines to keep *au courant* with political life was

40. On the funeral see Muḥammad-Rizā Ḥakīmī, *Sharaf al-Dīn* (Teheran: Daftar-i nashr-i farhang-i islāmī, 1360/1981), pp. 247–9.
41. Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*, pp. 44–5. According to Abazari, quoting Ayatollah Seyyed Mohammad-Ali Movahhed Abtahi Esfahani, who was present, the subject of Musa Sadr's succession was first broached at the funeral by the sons of Sharafeddin. Abādharī, *Imām Mūsā Sadr*, p. 63.
42. The confusion comes from the fact that as a result of some rivalry, Makarem Shirazi went and secured a licence for the former name, and Musa Sadr for the latter. Ghulāmriżā Kurbāschī, *Tārīkh-i shafāhī-yi inqilāb-i islāmī* (Teheran: Intishārāt-i markaz-i asnād-i inqilāb-i islāmī, 1380/2001), p. 252.

considered beneath the dignity of a man of the cloth, let alone producing them.⁴³ But then, Egypt's al-Azhar published a successful journal called *al-Azhar*, and there were some younger people in Qom who wished to emulate the Egyptians.

Ayatollah Shari'atmadari was receptive to the idea,⁴⁴ but apprehensive about Ayatollah Borujerdi's reaction. He asked Ali Davani, a young cleric who had broken with tradition and penned a few critical articles on socio-political themes, to put together an editorial board. This was not an easy task, for few ulema then could (or deigned to) write for the general public. Davani wanted to include Musa Sadr and got in touch with him in Najaf.⁴⁵

Musa Sadr was in many ways an obvious choice. Like many of his ancestors, he appreciated literature and was a good writer.⁴⁶ He was not content to limit himself to scholarly writing and, as a young man in 1951, had published a series of articles on 'patience and endurance in the Koran' in a journal that was briefly published by an association of young seminarians that had been founded in Qom at the suggestion of Allameh Tabataba'i with the aim of combating Marxism.⁴⁷ Eight

43. There had been religiously oriented newspapers such as *Parcham-i Islām* (Banner of Islam), *A'īn-i Islām* (Religion of Islam), and *Nidā-yi Haqq* (Call of Truth), but these had been edited by pious individuals and did not represent the *hawza* of Qom. See 'Khāṭirāt-i Hujjat al-Islām āqā-yi 'Alī Davānī', *Yād*, no. 8 (Autumn 1366/1987), pp. 46–7, and 60n.
44. Shari'atmadari's fallout with the Islamic Republic regime in 1982 has largely overshadowed his important role in fostering intellectual activity among more traditional youths. Among his initiatives three were destined to play an important part in the Islamic resurgence of the 1960s and 1970s: apart from the Dar al-Tabligh, there was the *Payām-i shādī*, a journal for children; *Nasl-i Naw*, a monthly publication for adolescents; and *Maktab-i Islām*, which later came under the auspices of the Dar al-Tabligh he had founded.
45. The other members of the editorial board were Morteza Jazayeri, Majdeddin Mahallati, Naser Makarem Shirazi, Abdolkarim Musavi Ardabili, Hosein Nuri Hamadani, Musa Sadr, Ja'far Sobhani, and Mohammad Va'ezzadeh Khorasani.
46. His father had been a celebrated poet in Arabic (see Tabrizi, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, vol. 2, p. 466.), and he himself wrote poetry on occasion. See Aḥmad Ithnā-ʿAsharī, 'Namūnah-yi faḍl va ithār', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Sadr*, p. 147. For an example of his poetry (1965 Isfahan) see Sayyid Murtidā Mustajābī, 'Usva-yi faḍilat, haqīqat-i mujassam', in *ibid.*, pp. 284–5.
47. The association was affiliated with the *Jam'e-ye Ta'limat-e Eslami* in Teheran. The members of the journal's editorial board were: Morteza Motahhari, Ali Qoddusi, Ebrahim Amini, Mehdi Haeri Tehrani and Musa Sadr. *Yādnāmah-yi Ustād-i 'Allāma Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'i* (Qom: Shafaq, 1362), pp. 66–8. And Maḥdī Ḥā'irī Tihrānī, 'Maḥbūb-i mardum-i Lubnān', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Sadr*, p. 246.

years later, Musa Sadr decided to pour his talents as a writer and editor into the new publication, and accepted the invitation.

From the outset, the editors of the journal and their mentor, Ayatollah Shari'atmadari, worried about securing the support of Ayatollah Borujerdi. When the first issue was published Ayatollah Borujerdi received about thirty letters urging him to stop the publication. Had he disapproved of it the journal would have been doomed, for Borujerdi exercised unprecedented control over the Shi'i establishment in Qom – in fact, never had one cleric dominated the Shi'i world as much as Ayatollah Borujerdi did from the time he became sole *marja'* in 1946 until his death in 1961.⁴⁸ Actually, Borujerdi wanted the *hawza* to publish a journal for the general public on the grounds that if al-Azhar in Cairo published a journal that was distributed worldwide, so should the *hawza* of Qom. But he felt too old to start a new initiative and, since a previous publishing experiment had turned sour, he was reluctant to entrust the project to others. The story of this previous attempt to endow the *hawza* with a publication is instructive and throws light on the suspicion with which Musa Sadr was viewed by the more conservative ulema in Qom.

In 1934, a young cleric by the name of Ali-Akbar Hakamizadeh, who was the son of a senior cleric of Qom by the name of Shaykh Mehdi Hakamizadeh, began publishing a journal named *Homayun* with the support and encouragement of a number of senior figures of the Qom *hawza*.⁴⁹ The editor's ideas about the place of modern scholarship and rationality in religion were unorthodox by the standards of

48. Although his leadership unified the Shi'i clerical establishment and caused it to increase its power and social influence (to the point where sectors of it could take power in Iran in 1979), the investiture of so much authority in one man also stifled personal initiatives of lesser clerics. Traditionally, high-ranking ulema had received their share of believers' tithes directly, which, combined with the institution of *ijtihad*, had conferred upon the *mujtahids* a certain degree of freedom of action that allowed them to pursue individual projects and that resulted in a certain intellectual pluralism within the religious establishment on the whole. Borujerdi's centralizing reforms put an end to the financial independence of most individual *mujtahids* (a few had their own power base, such as Ayatollah Shari'atmadari in his native Azerbaijan). All voluntary contributions were sent directly to him, and ulema had to go through his *bayt* (house) to receive any support, financial or otherwise. This meant that in practice it was nearly impossible for clerics to initiate any independent projects without Borujerdi's approval. On Borujerdi's reforms, see S. Murtidā Muṭahharī, 'Mazāyā va khadimāt-i marhūm Āyat Allāh Burūjirdī', in *Bahthī dar marja'iyat va rawḥāniyat* (Teheran: Intishār, 1962).

49. It was named after the editor's main collaborator and the journal's general manager, Mirza Mohammad Homayun(pur), who should not be confused with the Mohammad Homayun who was one of the founders of the Hoseiniyeh Ershad Institute in the 1970s.

the time, and he was accused of disseminating the ideas of Ahmad Kasravi and Shari'at Sangelaji in the articles that he personally contributed to it.⁵⁰ The ulema withdrew their support and *Homayun* ceased publication after 12 issues. Hakamizadeh (incidentally a nephew of S. Mahmud Taleqani) went to Teheran, became a follower of Ahmad Kasravi, the maverick anti-clerical intellectual who was assassinated for his views in 1944,⁵¹ and in 1943 published a now famous essay titled *Asrar-e hezar saleh* (Secrets of a Thousand Years), in which he questioned the legitimacy and integrity of the Shi'i clergy.⁵² It is an indication of this essay's importance that it was in response to it that a then unknown *mujtahid* by the name of Ruhollah Khomeini wrote a book titled *Kashf-e asrar* (Revealing the Secrets), which catapulted him onto Iran's political scene.⁵³ Add to *Homayun* the fact that Ahmad Kasravi had himself published a journal named *Peiman* with the support of some clerics before turning against the ulema, and one can understand why the involvement of Ayatollah Sadreddin Sadr's son in a new publication should have made Borujerdi feel uneasy. He said so when Davani went to see him after the first few issues of *Maktab-e Eslām* had been published. Borujerdi endorsed the new journal, even made a financial contribution to it, and told Davani that while he approved of the editorial committee he was unhappy about the inclusion of two *aqazadehs* (sons of senior clerics, in this case Musa Sadr and Majdeddin Mahallati), for experience had shown that they rarely served Islam.⁵⁴

The first issue of *Maktab-e Eslām* bears the date Azar 1337 (November/December 1958) and had been in the making for about a year. It opens with a short, unsigned piece titled '*Hadaf-e ma*' (our goal). As a result of the industrial revolution, this mission statement avers, the lives of people had changed dramatically. The amenities of modern life had created in the minds of superficial people a

50. On this little known figure see Yann Richard, 'Shari'at Sangelaji: A Reformist Theologian of the Rida Shah Period', in Said Amir Arjomand, ed., *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), pp. 159–77.

51. See footnote 26.

52. The above is based on the account of Ayatollah S. Hosein Bodala, who was a member of *Homayun*'s original editorial board. Markaz-i asnād-i inqilāb-i islāmī, ed., *Haftād sāl khāṭira az Āyat Allāh Sayyid Ḥusayn Budalā* (Teheran: Intishārāt-i markaz-i asnād-i inqilāb-i islāmī, 1378/1999), pp. 195–210.

53. A spirited defence of the ulema and a virulent attack on the secularizing policies of Reza Shah, the book has often been reprinted under the Arabicized title *Kashf al-asrār*. On this book see Vanessa Martin, 'Religion and State in Khumaini's *Kashf al-Asrar*', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 56: 1 (1993): 34–45.

54. Davānī, 'Imām Mūsā Ṣadr dar Īrān va Lubnān', in Khusravshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Ṣadr*, pp. 208–10; Davānī, *Zindagānī*, pp. 343–55; and 'Khāṭirāt-i Ḥujjat al-Islām āqā-yi 'Alī Davānī', pp. 46–56.

disdain for all that was old, including religious beliefs and moral strictures. Parallel with this corruption had spread to the public at large, allowing some individuals openly to flaunt all moral principles. At the same time, the young generation had not been introduced to the true meaning of religious beliefs and practice, judging them on the basis of erroneous conceptions that bore no resemblance to the true meaning of the religion. To combat the spirit of materialism that had descended on society, the article continued, there was no way other than to revive the principles of faith and morality and act upon the strictures enunciated by the prophets. In conclusion, the editors set themselves the task of introducing the public to the true spirit of Islamic teachings by publishing articles on a variety of subjects.⁵⁵

Musa Sadr began writing in *Maktab-e Eslām* from the third issue on and very soon became its *de facto* editor-in-chief, writing most of the editorials of the first year.⁵⁶ The general theme of these editorials was the exhortation to Muslims to be socially and politically active and not to resign themselves to their fate. To facilitate their task, the editors took English lessons, paid for by the merchants in Teheran,⁵⁷ and each member of the editorial board had a specific assignment: Davani had to write about the cultural achievements of Islam, Makarem Shirazi about religion and new ideas, Nuri Hamadani about astronomy and Islam, Sobhani about Islamic history, while Sadr concentrated on Islamic economics. This was a novel subject at the time and Sadr produced a series of articles that were later published as a book. In the early articles he refuted Marx's labour theory of value and in the final two he concluded that the owners of capital, work instruments and labour respectively had to share profits, and he proposed a series of criteria for this sharing.⁵⁸ Musa Sadr's emphasis on *distribution* was congruent with the thrust of the work of his first cousin, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, whose book *Iqtisādunā*, written around the same time, became a key text in what later became known as 'Islamic economics'.⁵⁹

55. 'Hadaf-i mā', *Darshā'i az maktab-i Islām*, 1:1 (Ādhar 1337/November–December 1958): 2–5.

56. Khusrawshāhī, 'Imām Mūsā Šadr: Khurshīdī hamchunān dirakhshān', in *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, p. 459.

57. Davānī, 'Imām Mūsā Šadr Īrān va Lubnān', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, p. 205.

58. Sayyid Mūsā Šadr, 'Sahm-i (kār - sarmāyah - abzār-i tawlīd) dar Islām', *Maktab-i Islām*, 12 (Ābān 1338/October–November 1959): 55–60.

59. The two were not only cousins but had also been close companions during Musa Sadr's Najaf days. Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, later married one of Musa Sadr's sisters. For a critical assessment of Baqir al-Sadr's book, see Mallat, *The Renewal of Islamic Law*, pp. 111–46; and Homa Katouzian, 'Sadr and Banidsadr', in Keddie, ed., *Religion and Politics in Iran*.

Soon clouds of discord came to darken the atmosphere and the editors started to quarrel with each other. In Azar 1338 (December 1959) some of the original founders placed a notice in *Keyhan*, one of Teheran's two major daily newspapers, to declare that they would no longer collaborate with the journal.⁶⁰ Musa Sadr's name figured in the announcement, but in fact he had already stopped collaborating with the journal, having gone on a visit to Najaf a few weeks earlier. Those who left the editorial board were replaced by other clerics.

Although the editors of *Maktab-e Islām* did not want the journal to be seen as an anti-regime publication, and in fact took pains to make sure not to provide the government with a pretext to close it down,⁶¹ the journal inaugurated a new era in the life of the *hawza*. *Maktab-e Eslām* broke with the elitist tradition of religious scholarship in which religious scholars essentially wrote for each other in a language of which few laymen could make sense, and instead adopted a modern and simplified style of presenting its materials, forcing its authors, all Qom clerics, to present religious subjects in a simple way that the educated public could easily understand.⁶² Its publication caused an upsurge in similar journals, chief among them being *Maktab-e Tashayyo'* (School of Shi'ism), which was founded in 1959 by a group of younger and more politicized seminarians, namely Mohammad Javad

60. For details see Davānī, 'Imām Mūsā Šadr dar Īrān va Lubnān', p. 9; Davānī, 'Khāṭirāt-i Ḥujjat al-Islām āqā-yi 'Alī Davānī'; 'Majalla'i barāyi ḥawza: Khāṭirāt-i Ḥujjat al-Islām āqā-yi 'Alī Ḥujjatī Kirmānī', *Yād*, no. 8 (Autumn 1366/1987), pp. 56–60; Āyat Allāh Shaykh Muḥammad Vā'izzādah Khurāsānī, 'Khāṭirāt az Lubnān va Imām Šadr', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, pp. 291–2 and Āyat Allāh Shaykh Muḥammad Vā'izzādah Khurāsānī, 'Muṣliḥ-i ijtimā'i', in *ibid.*, pp. 365–6.

61. Its publication was suspended a number of times nonetheless, and ended definitively when it refused to use the Imperial calendar that had replaced the Muslim solar calendar prevalent in Iran in 1976. For details see Shahrough Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Clergy–State Relations in the Pahlavi Period* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980), p. 161. For the change in calendars and the reactions it elicited see Siamak Movahedi, 'Cultural Preconceptions of Time: Can We Use Operational Time to Meddle in God's Time?' *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, 27 (July 1985).

62. Beginning in the sixteenth century, the Persian language had become heavily Arabized as a result of prominence accorded to the ulema by the Safavids, as discussed in Chapter 3. In the nineteenth century a reaction set in, but the proponents of this turn to a more simple language tended to be secularists critical of clerical influence in society. See Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, 'Language Reform Movement and its Language: the Case of Persian', in Björn H. Jernudd and Michael J. Shapiro, eds, *The Politics of Language Purism* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989), pp. 81–104. It was thus precisely to maintain their influence in society that the young clerics emulated the ulema's critics.

Bahonar, Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mohammad Reza Salehi Kermani. Its editorial line was more explicitly political and anti-regime, and the editors tried to get the active support of Khomeini, who had a reputation for speaking up on politics since publishing *Kashf-e asrar*, but Khomeini was quiet in those days and did not pay much attention to them. It published a yearly issue until it had to cease publication in 1964.⁶³ The initiators of both journals continued their activism in the 1960s and 1970s, and many of them rose to high positions in the Islamic Republic: Musavi Ardabili headed the judiciary from 1981, Bahonar was briefly prime minister in the summer of 1981 before being assassinated in late August, and Hashemi Rafsanjani was speaker of parliament from 1980 to 1988 and president from 1989 to 1997.

The second project, which Musa Sadr undertook in collaboration with Mohammad Beheshti, was even more ambitious.⁶⁴ Earlier, in the late 1940s, a number of clerics, including Khomeini, had tried to reorganize and reform the *hawza*, but Borujerdi had stopped them.⁶⁵ Now Musa Sadr and Beheshti prepared a preliminary plan for the reformation of the *hawza* (*Tarh-e moqaddamati-ye eslah-e howzeh*), and Borujerdi agreed to look at it. But conservatives took issue with the proposals and the plan was withdrawn.⁶⁶ This setback did not, however, end efforts to rationalize the functioning of the *hawza*. After Ayatollah Borujerdi's death in 1961 new efforts were made to reform the religious establishment, spearheaded this time by Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari, who presented a new plan in 1962.⁶⁷ By this time, however, Musa Sadr had given up on Iran and concentrated his efforts on Lebanon. Indeed, the inertia Musa Sadr encountered in Iran was an important factor in his decision to move to Lebanon, where he hoped to be less hamstrung by clerical traditionalists on the one hand and an unsympathetic government on the other.⁶⁸ Finally, in June 1959 Musa Sadr founded a private high school in Qom, to

63. Interview with 'Alī-Akbar Hāshimī Rafsanjānī, *Yād*, no. 8 (Autumn 1366/1987), pp. 42–4; Abādharī, *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, p. 70.

64. Beheshti went on to become the founder of the Islamic Republican Party in 1979 and one of Ayatollah Khomeini's most important lieutenants in Iran. He was the Islamic Republic's first chief of the judiciary and was killed when the headquarters of the Islamic Republican Party was blown up in June 1981.

65. Davānī, *Zindagānī*, pp. 307–24.

66. Abādharī, *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, p. 78; and Makārim Shīrāzī, 'Mazhar-i 'ilm va tavādu', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, pp. 119–20. We have no record of what their plan was.

67. See Murtidā Mutahharī, 'Mushkil-i asāsī dar sazimān-i rawḥaniyat', in *Baḥthī dar marja'iyat va rawḥaniyat* (Teheran: Intishār, 1341/1962). For a discussion see A. K. S. Lambton, 'A Reconsideration of the Position of the *Marja' Al-Taqlid* and the Religious Institution', *Studia Islamica*, 20 (1964): 115–35.

68. Āyat Allāh Shaykh Nāṣir Makārim Shīrāzī, 'Mazhar-i 'ilm va tavādu', in

provide observant parents with an alternative to the state educational system. But soon he left Iran for good.⁶⁹

In the 1950s Ayatollah Borujerdi had decided to send a number of resident representatives to Western countries.⁷⁰ The first two envoys, Mohammad Mohaqqueqi Lahijani and Mehdi Haeri Yazdi, had gone to Hamburg and Washington, respectively.⁷¹ The third was to be Musa Sadr, whom Borujerdi chose to send to Italy, but he turned down the invitation. In November 1959 Sadr left Iran for Najaf, and it was there that Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim, who wielded great influence in Lebanon (one of his wives was Lebanese), urged him to accept the standing invitation to go to Tyre.⁷² He went there after only a few weeks in Najaf, and agreed to stay.⁷³ Musa Sadr went to Lebanon to try to improve the lot of the Shi'is, but Sharafeddin's sons wanted him because they saw him as a weak person whom they could dominate.⁷⁴ In Qom, some regretted his departure, seeing in it an impoverishment of religious intellectual life in Iran.⁷⁵

Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, p. 119.

69. Abādharī, *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, pp. 74–8.

70. See Davānī, *Zindagānī*, pp. 252–8 and 298–303.

71. Mohaqqueqi had been preceded briefly by a certain Shaykh Abolqasem Mohammadi Golpayegani (whose son is the chief-of-staff of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khameneh'i), whose German visa was cancelled when he told German reporters at a press conference that Hitler had been popular among Iranians. (Davānī, *Zindagānī*, p. 299.) Mohaqqueqi returned to Iran a few years after Borujerdi's death. He was succeeded by Mohammad Beheshti (1964–70). From 1971 to 1978 the Islamic centre of Hamburg was under the directorship of Mohammad Mojtabeh-e Shabastari (1971–78), who was in turn succeeded by Mohammad Khatami, who became the president of Iran in 1997. For the history of the Hamburg mission see M. S. Abdullah, *Geschichte des Islams in Deutschland* (Graz: Verlag Styria, 1981), pp. 125–8; and *Tārīkhchah-yi masjid va markaz-i islāmī-yi Hāmbūrg* (Hamburg: Islamisches Zentrum e.V., 1995).

72. Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*, pp. 44–5. According to Halawī, the position was first offered to Musa's older brother Reza, who declined it. *A Lebanon Defied*, p. 124.

73. Abādharī, *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, pp. 60–1; Abṭāhī, 'Shāyistah-yi Marja'iyat', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, pp. 184–5.

74. Sulṭānī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 'Imām Mūsā, Shāyistah-yi Marja'iyat', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, p. 56.

75. Similarly, after he became popular in Lebanon, some local clerics became jealous of him. Having nothing to raise against him, they resorted to impugning him for being an Iranian. One Lebanese cleric in particular, Muhammad Jawad Mughniyya, issued a statement to the effect that all Iranian clerics in Lebanon had political links to the regime in Iran. But Sadr treated him with respect, with the result that he won over many of his followers. Shaykh Maḥmūd Khalīlī, 'Mafkhar-i dunyā-yi Islām, 'ālimī mustaqill va siyāsatmadārī āzādandīsh', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, pp. 305–9.

SADR AND IRAN AFTER 1959

Musa Sadr's settling in Lebanon did not sever his ties with Iran, which he visited in the summer of 1961. The early 1960s witnessed a modest liberalization of the Shah's regime, and a number of religiously oriented laymen and politicized clerics around Mehdi Bazargan and S. Mahmud Taleqani took advantage of the less repressive atmosphere to organize a number of lecture series. On 8 August 1961, at their invitation, Sadr delivered a speech on the topic 'Islam is a religion of life',⁷⁶ and on 29 September, in the newly founded monthly lecture series called *Goftar-e mah dar namayandan-e rah-e rast-e din* (monthly talk on revealing the true path of religion),⁷⁷ he lectured on his experience in Lebanon. In this talk, titled 'The world is ready to accept the call of Islam', he first emphasized the need for believers to be socially active and work towards the betterment of Muslims. He then proceeded to introduce Lebanon to his listeners:

The Shi'is number 340,000 in Lebanon. ... They are the third largest community; the speaker of parliament is a Shi'i; they have 19 members of parliament and normally one-fifth of the ministers and high-level officials must be Shi'is. Because of this political tradition, religion and social interests have become intermingled, and turned religion into a *nationalité*⁷⁸ that is not devoid of material and political interests. For historical reasons [the Shi'is] are among Lebanon's most backward groups; centuries of Ottoman despotism has kept this group poor, illiterate and oppressed by a few individuals. Then French imperialism replaced [the Ottomans] and maintained, if not worsened, the pitiful state of this group. In the period since Lebanon's independence remnants of influential feudals have continued their efforts and added to the problem.

Until some years ago all newspaper sellers, shoe shiners, porters, lift attendants and waiters in Beirut were Shi'is. If the call to religion is not accompanied by action, and if the social situation of the caller to religion and that of his coreligionists is bad, the call will have little impact. One of the greatest reasons for nullifying the claims of a caller to religion is his

76. According to a SAVAK document reprinted in *Yārān-i Imām bah rivāyat-i asnād-i Sāvāk: Āyat Allāh Imām Mūsā Šadr*, vol. 1 (Markaz-i barrasī-y asnād-i tārikhī-yi vizārat-i iṭṭilā'āt, 2000), p. 15 of the documents section.

77. For background information on the talks see Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, pp. 117–29; and H. E. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: The Liberation Movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1990), pp. 170–2.

78. In French in the original.

social situation. After all, how can the people believe the claims of a Muslim that Islam is the guarantor of happiness in this world and the next world if they are mired in poverty, ignorance, illness and filth? The demeanour of the merchants, the young, the women and the politicians is all corrupt and perverse, and this is proof of the baselessness of every caller's claims.

The late *mujahid* Ayatollah Sayyid Abdulhusayn Sharafeddin and the other enlightened Muslim leaders paid attention to this situation and tried to remedy it to some extent by founding the *al-kulliyya al-ja'fariyya* in Tyre. At the present time tens of thousands of educated human beings, some of whom render great services to society and occupy important posts, can be found among the Shi'is of Lebanon. The main credit for this goes to the efforts of the late Sharafeddin and the alert leaders of Lebanon's Shi'is, and is due to the activities of the *al-kulliyya al-ja'fariyya* and the *al-kulliyya al-āmiliyya*. In this respect a saying by Sharafeddin is apposite: *lā tanshirū al-hudā min haythu intashara al-dalāl*,⁷⁹ which by itself testifies to the grandness of his soul, the high-mindedness of his thinking and the abundance of his creativity, and is a very worthy guiding principle for action.

Yes, there was a time when culture was the cause for the young and the power holders to stray [from the right path]. Today, [however, culture] has to be used to reform the Muslim people. The 85 per cent illiteracy rate of our people is the greatest shame and the greatest proof that a religious missionary (*moballegh*) who claims that his religion can bring happiness is a liar. One must ... help fight ignorance whatever forms this struggle takes.

How astonishing it is that Islam makes the acquisition of knowledge a religious duty, while the most ignorant people are Muslims. Cleanliness is part of faith, while the dirtiest people, streets, houses and children are Muslim. ... To continue the services rendered by Imam Sharafeddin and to remedy the social backwardness of the Shi'is, I have taken some measures in the city of Tyre.⁸⁰

He then told his audience about the measures he had taken to eradicate mendicancy and the methods he had used to attract young people and women to community life.⁸¹ He repeated his Lebanon presentation to Iranian audiences a few weeks later when he lectured in Mashhad.⁸²

79. In Arabic in the original: 'Do not spread good guidance in the same manner in which bad guidance is spread.'

80. Mūsā Šadr, 'Jahān āmadah-yi padhīruftan-i da'vat-i islāmī ast', in *Guftār-i māh dar namāyāndan-i rāh-i rāst-i dīn*, vol. 2 (Teheran: Šuddūq, n.d.), pp. 36–8.

81. Ibid., pp. 38–43.

82. *Yārān-i Imām*, vol. 1, p. 19.

His activities in Lebanon betrayed a pragmatism and flexibility (for instance on the issue of veiling) that would have been unthinkable in religious circles in Iran at the time. Only later, in the late 1960s, did some Shi'i modernists in Iran employ similar methods at the Hoseiniyeh Ershad Institute in Teheran, and one cannot exclude the possibility that they were to some extent influenced by the successes Sadr had achieved in distant Tyre.⁸³

In the summer of 1963 Sadr visited Italy (where he attended the enthronement of Pope Paul VI), France, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt, and everywhere he went he talked to Iranian and Shi'i groups, asking them to help their coreligionists and compatriots financially.⁸⁴

In Iran the year 1963 also saw the Shah's White Revolution and the end of the political liberalization. Men like Mehdi Bazargan and S. Mahmud Taleqani went to prison and in June riots by Ayatollah Khomeini's supporters were suppressed amid much bloodshed. Musa Sadr apparently signed a protest note that a number of Lebanese ulema sent to the Shah⁸⁵ and a few months later he applied for Lebanese citizenship. He submitted his Iranian passport to the Lebanese government, which forwarded it to the Iranian embassy in Beirut. The Iranian embassy returned it to Sadr as a courtesy, accepting in fact that he had dual citizenship, which was (and is) against Iranian civil law. SAVAK criticized the embassy's act and grew even more irate when he entered Iran for a visit with a newly renewed Iranian passport on 30 July 1965. SAVAK was informed that the decision to let him in had been taken by the Shah personally.⁸⁶ This, however, did not endear the Shah to Musa Sadr, for in his speeches and sermons in Iran he severely criticized the regime. On 6 October 1965, at the invitation of Majdeddin Mahallati, he ascended the pulpit in Shiraz. SAVAK summarized his sermon as follows:

The enemies of Islam have crossed the borders of Muslim nations and infiltrated the heart of our country and engaged in nefarious propaganda. Why do you people not react? Why do women not have religious sessions? Why do women not study? Don't leave your ulema alone, go to their houses

83. On the Hoseiniyeh Ershad see Chehabi, *Iranian Politics*, pp. 202–10; Nouchine Yavari-d'hellencourt, 'L'Hosseynieh Ershad: un coin islamiste enfoncé au coeur de la capitale', in Chahryar Adle and Bernard Hourcade, eds, *Téhéran: capitale bicentenaire* (Paris–Teheran: Institut français de Recherche en Iran, 1992), pp. 329–44; and Ali Rahnema, *An Islamic Utopian: A Political Biography of Ali Shari'ati* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1998), chapters 16–18.

84. According to a SAVAK document reproduced in *Yārān-i Imām*, vol. 1, p. 22.

85. This protest note is twice alluded to in the collection of SAVAK documents, but is not reproduced. See *Yārān-i Imām*, vol. 1, pp. 29 and 32.

86. *Yārān-i Imām*, vol. 1, pp. 32, 34–5, 39–41.

and hold meetings. ... The goal must be elevated and sacred, why are you not acting? Worst of all is Baha'ism, which has no value and is influential in our country. They steal our youth and girls and we are not doing anything.⁸⁷

In the 1960s Sadr maintained contact with Iranian officials in Beirut. As A. W. Samii documents in his chapter in this book, the Iranian government had decided to pay more attention to Lebanon's Shi'is and, insofar as this would bring greater financial largess, Musa Sadr could only welcome the increased attention. His enemies, however, used these contacts to sully his reputation. If Musa Sadr's anti-Shah stance in the context of domestic Iranian politics and his contacts with the Shah's men in Lebanon seem contradictory, his position was made even more complicated as the 1960s ended and the 1970s began. In 1968 a Ba'thist *coup d'état* took place in Iraq and the new regime became ever more repressive towards its Shi'i population. At the same time the deterioration of Iraq's relations with Iran culminated in the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of citizens considered to be of Iranian origin. Many Iraqi clerics sought refuge in Lebanon where the great majority of the country's Shi'i ulema had become highly critical of the Iraqi regime. Henceforth, Iraqi money was made available to Musa Sadr's enemies and articles were planted in the Lebanese press to portray him as too pro-Iranian.⁸⁸

The second international development to affect Musa Sadr's relations with Iran was the Palestinian resistance's entry into Lebanon in 1970 and 1971 in the wake of its expulsion from Jordan. In the 1960s Musa Sadr loyally supported the Palestinian cause, but when Palestinian resistance organizations, newly relocated to the south of Lebanon, began to launch attacks on northern Israel from there in 1970 and 1971, the Shi'is of south Lebanon became the main victims of Israeli reprisal raids and, as a result, tensions mounted between Shi'is and the Palestinian resistance.⁸⁹

The Shah's Iran maintained cordial relations with Israel and was wary of the Palestinians because of their friendliness with Arab nationalist regimes.⁹⁰ In early 1971 Musa Sadr asked the influential Iranian scholar Seyyed Hossein Nasr, during a meeting in Kuwait, to urge the Shah to ask the United States to put pressure on Israel not to attack south Lebanon.⁹¹ At the same time as the Palestinian presence

87. *Ibid.*, pp. 47–8.

88. On the Lebanese Shi'i ulema's stance, see *Yārān-i Imām*, vol. 1, pp. 104, 188–92. Some SAVAK staff wanted to plant further anti-Sadr articles in the Lebanese press on the assumption that these would be ascribed to Iraq, would weaken Sadr and would drive him closer to the Iranians. *Ibid.*, pp. 194–5.

89. See Ajami, *The Vanished Imam*, pp. 120–6 and 160–7.

90. See Robert B. Reppa, *Israel and Iran: Bilateral Relationship and Effect on the Indian Ocean Basin* (New York: Praeger, 1974).

91. *Yārān-i Imām*, vol. 1, p. 128.

in Lebanon was growing, armed resistance began against the Shah's regime in Iran. Taking advantage of Lebanon's openness, many newly constituted groups, some Islamist some Marxist-Leninist, established contact with Palestinian organizations with a view to having their fighters trained in their camps. A number of Iranians thus entered Lebanon and they expected Musa Sadr to assist them. Of course there were Iranians in Musa Sadr's entourage, most notably Mostafa Chamran who became director of the Burj al-Shimali technical institute and later took a leading role in founding the Amal movement.⁹² But, while Chamran and his likes had a history of anti-Shah activism in Iran and the United States, in Lebanon they were concerned with the needs and interests of Lebanon's Shi'is, which were not always congruent with those of the Palestinians.

In the early 1970s relations between the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council, chaired by Musa Sadr, and the Iranian government were generally good. On a religious level the council had pronounced itself in favour of Ayatollah Khu'i of Najaf after the death of Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim in 1970, and Khu'i was known for his abstinence from political involvement, which reassured the Iranian government. In November 1971 Musa Sadr visited Iran for the first time in six years. In his meetings with Iranian officials, which the Lebanese ambassador arranged, he expressed his loyalty to Iran and ascribed past misunderstandings to Iranian representatives in Lebanon having misreported his actions and statements. He also asked for financial help to build a hospital and give scholarships to indigent Shi'is. Iranian Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveyda assured him that the Shah was the only Shi'i head of state in the world and had the interests of all Shi'is at heart.⁹³ In the course of his trip, which lasted until the end of February, he met officials and clerics who asked him to use his entrée to the regime to intervene on behalf of gaoled religious activists, including Hashemi Rafsanjani.⁹⁴ On 18 January 1972 he met the Shah at Court and again asked him for a hospital and university.⁹⁵ Many criticized Sadr for meeting the Shah. His response was that the Shah's domestic and international image were very different: domestically he was seen as a tyrant, but internationally he was the head of state of an important nation and, as such, it was his duty to meet him.

The promised aid was, however, slow in coming and in the autumn of 1972 Musa Sadr, along with a few other clerics and Chamran, left for the Soviet Union at the invitation of the mufti of Kazakhstan and Central Asia; again he asked for a hospital.⁹⁶

In 1973 Musa Sadr's relations with the Iranian government cooled considerably

92. For details see Chapter 8, pp. 183–5.

93. *Yārān-i Imām*, vol. 1, pp. 295–303.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 306.

95. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 335–6.

96. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 409–19.

and he eventually became squarely identified with the opposition. As we saw in Chapter 1, the Iranian government, even under the reputedly secularist Pahlavi monarchy, was not averse to using Shi'is outside Iran to further its foreign policy objectives and would have liked to have used Sadr for this purpose. Sadr, however, had his own agenda: to improve the lot of the Shi'is and to shield them from Israeli attacks while supporting both the Palestinian cause and the anti-Shah opposition, objectives that were difficult to reconcile in practice and that required close contact with Arab governments. Thus, while walking a tightrope between Palestinians and southern Lebanese on the one hand and between the Iraqi and the Iranian governments on the other, Musa Sadr found time to travel around the world. Because of his stature in Lebanon many heads of state were willing to receive him, especially in the Muslim world. Everywhere he went he asked for help for the poor of southern Lebanon and a number of oil-rich Arab states promised him funds. According to the Lebanese ambassador to Iran, Khalil al-Khalil (a Shi'i who served in Iran from 1971 to 1978 and whose father had been secretary-general of Camille Chamoun's Liberal Party), Sadr blamed Mansur Qader, the new Iranian ambassador in Beirut, who had wanted to use him, for the deterioration of his ties with the Iranian government.⁹⁷ He regretted the departure from Lebanon of Qader's predecessor, Rokneddin Ashtiani (who was a nephew of Musa Sadr's wife),⁹⁸ but Iranian officials told the Lebanese ambassador that the Iranian government could not overlook Sadr's close ties with Iranian oppositionists and Arab nationalists.⁹⁹

In late 1973 Sadr began to speak publicly against the Shah's policies and accused him of undermining the Arab oil boycott that followed the October war by continuing to supply the West and Israel with oil. Perhaps he had realized that, to maintain his legitimacy in the Arab world, he had to distance himself from Iran; SAVAK even suspected him of having ties with the Iraqi regime.¹⁰⁰ On 9 February, a few weeks after Sadr's much-publicized outburst, the Iranian embassy in Beirut informed the Lebanese press agency that it would suspend payment for the hospital in southern Lebanon; the Shah had ordered Prime Minister Hoveyda to inform Lebanon's Shi'is that as long as Sadr was there Iran would not make financial contributions. A few days later the Iranian embassy in Beirut was ordered not to renew his passport, which amounted to stripping Sadr of his Iranian citizenship. It seems that at this point the Iraqi government stepped in and promised Sadr that it would pay for the hospital.¹⁰¹ Sadr also established privileged links with the Syrian

97. See Chapter 7, pp. 176–7.

98. *Yārān-i Imām*, vol. 1, p. 344.

99. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 477–8.

100. *Yārān-i Imām bah rivāyat-i asnād-i Sāvāk: Āyat Allāh Imām Mūsā Ṣadr*, vol. 2 (Markaz-i barrasī-y asnād-i tārikhī-yi vizārat-i ittilā'āt, 2000), p. 24.

101. *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 45, 69, 121.

government and in fact engineered a theological *rapprochement* between the Alawite sect and mainstream Twelver Shi'ism.¹⁰²

Meanwhile, the Lebanese government under President Suleiman Franjeh had become the object of Sadr's increasingly virulent attacks, for he deemed it insufficiently committed to helping the people of south Lebanon. Shi'i personalities close to the government, including the Lebanese ambassador to Iran, tried to appease the Shah by criticizing Sadr and dismissing him as a mere cleric whose views should not be taken as representative of either the official position or public opinion among the Shi'is.¹⁰³ In his memoirs, the Iranian minister of the Court, Amir Asadollah Alam, has left a record of how the Shah viewed Sadr. On 23 April 1974 Alam told the Lebanese ambassador in Iran that 'their common friend' Musa Sadr had revealed himself to be *tusorkh* (red inside) and that he took money from everybody, Iraq, Egypt, Morocco and Libya, indiscriminately. The ambassador told him that Iran should help the Shi'is independently of Sadr. Alam thought that he was right but that the Shah would not relent. The next day, when Alam briefed the Shah, the latter said that as long as Sadr remained he would not help the Shi'is of Lebanon.¹⁰⁴ On 10 December 1974 the ambassador asked Alam why the Shi'is should be blamed for Sadr having disappointed the Shah.¹⁰⁵ Alam relayed this to the Shah who did not change his mind.¹⁰⁶ The Khalil family in fact maintained close ties with Sadr and SAVAK claimed that Musa Sadr communicated with his friends in Iran by using Khalil al-Khalil's diplomatic pouch.¹⁰⁷

In June 1977 the influential Islamist ideologue Ali Shariati died in London.¹⁰⁸ Shariati's friends in the United States and Europe persuaded the British authorities to hand over the corpse to them and they decided to bury it at the shrine of Imam Husayn's sister Zaynab in Damascus. The Iranian government tried to have Shariati's body flown to Iran for an officially sponsored burial and even sent an

102. For details see S. Mervin, 'Quelques jalons pour une histoire du rapprochement (taqrīb) des alaouites vers le chiisme', in Rainer Brunner, Monika Gronke, Jens Peter Laut and Ulrich Rebstock, eds, *Islamstudien ohne Ende: Festschrift für Werner Ende zum 65. Geburtstag* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), pp. 281–90.

103. *Yārān-i Imām*, vol. 2, pp. 26, 90–1.

104. 'Alīnaqī 'Ālīkhānī, ed., *Yāddāshthā-yi 'Alam*, vol. 4 (Bethesda, Md.: IBEX Publishers, n.d.), pp. 47 and 48.

105. Ibid.

106. See Chapter 1, footnote 97 for the Shah's response.

107. *Yārān-i Imām*, vol. 2, p. 155.

108. On Shariati and his thought see Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), pp. 102–46; Chehabi, *Iranian Politics*, pp. 68–73, 187–9, and 204–10; and Rahnema, *An Islamic Utopian*.

aeroplane to Damascus,¹⁰⁹ but Musa Sadr used his cordial relations with the Syrian government to sabotage that plan. He himself officiated at the burial, for which he was criticized by conservative clerics.¹¹⁰ Forty days later he organized a memorial service for him in Beirut, but would not allow pictures of Khomeini to be put up until, under pressure from Mohammad Montazeri (a radical whose exploits are recounted in Chapters 8 and 9), he consented to one small photo.¹¹¹

This reluctance to put up his picture points to Musa Sadr's ambiguous relationship with Khomeini. Their styles could not have been more different: where Sadr was conciliatory and reformist, Khomeini was unyielding and revolutionary. Moreover, relations between the Sadr and Khomeini families had been tense even in Iran.¹¹² However, Sadr and Khomeini had one thing in common: their political activism and opposition to quietist apolitical clergy, which led them to cooperate occasionally.¹¹³ It appears that when tensions arose in Najaf between Khomeini and Musa Sadr's cousin Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, Musa Sadr played a role in reconciling the two.¹¹⁴ Khomeini's apparent rebuke to Amal for giving insufficient support to the Palestinian cause added to the malaise, but in late 1977 a visit to Lebanon by Khomeini's younger son, Ahmad, smoothed relations between Sadr and Khomeini.¹¹⁵

As the revolutionary movement in Iran gathered steam in 1978, Sadr followed it with sympathy. In May he arranged for the Lebanon correspondent of *Le Monde*,

109. The idea was to split the Islamist opposition, whose more conservative components had nothing good to say about Shariati.

110. For accounts of Shariati's burial and Musa Sadr's role see Ibrahim Yazdī, 'Naqsh-i Imām Mūsā Šadr dar Lubnān va inqilāb-i Īrān', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, pp. 413–14.

111. Jalāl al-Dīn Fārsī, *Zavāyā-yi tārik* (Teheran: Ḥadīth, 1373/1994), pp. 392–4; and Sayyid 'Alī-Akbar Muhtashamī, *Khāṭirāt-i siyāsī* (Teheran: Khānah-yi andīshah-yi javān, 1378/2000), vol. 2, p. 276. For Sadr's eulogy see Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied*, p. 176.

112. Private communication from a Qom *mujtahid*. One might add that Ayatollah Shari'atmadari, who was defrocked by the Iranian government in 1982 for his knowledge of Sadeq Qotbzadeh's plans for a *coup d'état*, appointed Musa Sadr's brother Reza Sadr as his agent (*vakīl*) and testamentary executor (*vasī*), but that Khomeini did not allow Reza Sadr to arrange for a proper burial and funeral prayers when Shari'atmadari died. See Ayatollah Hosein Ali Montazeri's memoirs, *Matn-i kāmīl-i khāṭirāt-i Āyat Allāh Ḥusayn-'Alī Muntaẓirī* (Spanga: Baran; Vincennes: Khavaran; Essen: Nima [=Ittīhād-i nāshirīn-i Īrānī dar Urūpā], 2001), p. 267.

113. It seems that in the early years of the revolutionary struggle, while he was still in Najaf, Khomeini earmarked Sadr for heading an Islamic government in Iran. Abādharī, *Imām Mūsā Šadr*, p. 228, quoting Ayatollah Movahhed Abtahi Esfahani.

114. Yazdī, 'Naqsh-i Imām Mūsā Šadr dar Lubnān', p. 413.

115. For details see chapter 8, p. 196.

Lucien Georges, to go to Najaf and interview Khomeini for the first time.¹¹⁶ On this occasion Khomeini voiced very liberal-sounding criticisms of the Shah's despotism and called for Iran's independence from the two super powers.¹¹⁷ In the summer of 1978, as the Shah's government turned to some moderate erstwhile opponents in a last-ditch effort to save itself, an attempt was made to invite Musa Sadr to come to Iran to defuse the tension.¹¹⁸ But on 23 August Musa Sadr wrote an article in *Le Monde* in which he attacked the Shah and praised Khomeini.¹¹⁹ It was to be his last, for a few days later he disappeared in Libya.¹²⁰

CONCLUSION

As we have tried to show in this chapter, by the time he settled in Lebanon Musa Sadr was no neophyte and had in fact been one of the initiators of the Islamic resurgence in Iran. A combination of push and pull factors had prompted his decision to leave Iran. He was disappointed by the conservatism of Iran's clerical establishment, which constantly stifled his initiatives; he had no sympathy for the Shah's regime; and financially he was not doing too well either. He was drawn to Lebanon because he felt he could make a difference there and because he had old family ties in that country.

Sadr's move to Lebanon reveals something about the structure of the clerical establishment of Shi'ism. That the Shi'is of southern Lebanon chose to ask an Iranian to lead them, and addressed their request to the highest authority of the faith in Qom, proves the existence of a transnational hierarchy, although not nearly as centralized an organization as that of a 'church' in the Weberian sense of the

116. Sadr knew Georges personally, for apparently he had married a Lebanese Shi'i and converted to Shi'ism in the presence of Sadr himself. Yazdī, 'Naqsh-i Imām Mūsā Sadr dar Lubnān', p. 415.

117. This interview was published in *Le Monde*, 6 May 1978. An English translation was published in *The Guardian* of 21 May 1978. The whole interview, including parts omitted in the newspaper versions, can be found in Ali-Reza Nobari, *Iran Erupts* (Stanford, Cal.: The Iran-America Documentation Group, 1978), pp. 9–17.

118. Telephone interview with Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1 June 2004. Nasr had befriended Musa Sadr when he taught at AUB as the first Agha Khan Professor of Islamic Studies in 1964–65, and maintained cordial relations with him until Sadr's disappearance. He encouraged the Shah's effort to invite Sadr to Iran in the summer of 1978.

119. Moussa el-Sadr, 'L'appel des prophètes', *Le Monde*, 23 August 1978, p. 4.

120. For a somewhat speculative account see Peter Theroux, *The Strange Disappearance of Imam Moussa Sadr* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987). Pro-Libyan circles, radio stations, and newspapers in Lebanon had attacked Musa Sadr repeatedly, and he went to Libya to clear the air, the suggestion for such a meeting having been made by the Algerian government. Chamrān, *Lubnān*, p. 338.

term.¹²¹ The absence of a centralized ecclesiastical organization allowed for different climates of opinion to hold sway among Shi'is in Lebanon and Iran, a difference that made Lebanon so attractive to Sadr. Far from being a backwater of the Shi'i world, south Lebanon was in fact in its vanguard *before* Musa Sadr arrived there.¹²² Perhaps it is precisely the distance to Najaf and Qom that made 'Amili dynamism possible, to which one must add that, unlike Iran, Shi'is were a minority in Lebanon and thus faced problems and a political framework for solving them that was different from Iran, where Shi'is are the majority and their religion the official religion of the state.

121. Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: California University Press, 1978), p. 1164.

122. Chibli Mallat, *Shi'i Thought from the South of Lebanon* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1988).

The Security Relationship Between Lebanon and Pre-Revolutionary Iran

A. W. Samii

During the rule of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, the Shah's wider foreign policy objectives determined Iran's position towards Lebanon, which contained several overlapping and interconnected elements. The main determinant was the Shah's stance against the Soviet Union and communism. Hand in hand with this went his stance as a pro-American and pro-British ally of the West. When viewed in a Middle Eastern context, the driving force of the Shah's foreign policy derived from his concern with and resistance to Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. He believed that Nasser was a Soviet ally whose activities caused regional instability that local communist parties could exploit. These wider foreign policy objectives also determined the Shah's relationship with Lebanon. The years during which Nasser was the Shah's main concern constitute the first stage of Iranian-Lebanese relations and they lasted roughly until 1970.

The observation that 'all politics is local' applies to the next stage of relations between Iran and Lebanon, namely the remainder of the 1970s. During this time the Shah was deeply concerned about the threat to his regime from opposition groups such as the Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI), the People's Mojahedin of Iran (PMOI), the Marxist Fada'iyan and the Islamist Opposition. Knowing that elements of these organizations were receiving military training in Lebanon, the need for intelligence on their activities became a major concern of the Shah.¹

The Shah's major instrument for the conduct of sensitive foreign policy was the national intelligence and security organization, better known under its Persian acronym SAVAK (*Sazeman-e Ettela'at va Amniyat-e Keshvar*), which was created in 1957 and which staged a number of intelligence operations in Lebanon and

1. For details on these groups' activities in Lebanon see Chapter 8.

throughout the Middle East.² These had two objectives: to shape foreign affairs in a manner conducive to the security of Iran and its allies, and to safeguard domestic Iranian security against internal threats.

SAVAK and intelligence operations will receive most of the attention in this chapter because that is where the greatest emphasis lies in the security aspect of Iranian-Lebanese relations. This is because the military aspect of the two countries' relationship was inconsequential. As J. C. Hurewitz noted about the minor importance of the military, 'Lebanon was one of the least active buyers in the arms market'.³ No successive Lebanese governments from the time of Lebanon's formation as a state through the 1960s chose to spend money on expanding their armed forces. Instead, Lebanon relied on the international community when force of arms was needed. Consider a comparison between Lebanon and Jordan: Lebanon had a larger population than Jordan, yet the Lebanese armed forces were not even a quarter the size of Jordan's.⁴

POLITICAL OPERATIONS AND COVERT ACTIONS: 1957-64

Active Iranian participation in Lebanon began in 1957 when the Lebanese political system faced significant public unrest. Demonstrators objected to two things. First, in the light of the popularity of Nasser's pan-Arabism, was President Camille Chamoun's generally pro-Western stance. This was exemplified by his adherence to the Eisenhower Doctrine, according to which the United States would send troops to any Middle Eastern country whose government requested help to fend off armed aggression. Many Lebanese also objected to his attempt to introduce a constitutional amendment that would allow him to stand for a second term as president. Behind these two factors was a heightening polarization within the Lebanese political elite, which was becoming increasingly unhappy about Chamoun's corruption, the failure of his reform drives and his attempts to rig the 1957 elections. It has also been suggested that socio-economic grievances were a central cause of the crisis, but such factors became really significant only during the next two decades.⁵

Some suspected President Nasser of encouraging the demonstrations. His hostility to Chamoun can be traced to the latter's attempts to mediate in the Egyptian-

2. See Abbas William Samii, 'The Shah's Lebanon Policy: The Role of SAVAK', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 33:1 (1997).

3. Jacob Coleman Hurewitz, *Middle East Politics: The Military Dimension* (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 388.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 391-2.

5. Caroline Attié, 'President Chamoun and the Crisis of 1958', paper presented at the Conference on Lebanon in the 1950s, held at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, 11-12 September 1992, p. 6.

Iraqi dispute over the Baghdad Pact and his refusal to sever diplomatic relations with Britain and France over the Suez crisis (November 1956). Nasser was also angry with Chamoun for refusing to allow Lebanon to enter a union with Egypt. The belief that Nasser was encouraging the demonstrations gained plausibility with the arrest in Beirut of two Syrian intelligence agents and reports that Syria and Egypt had provided Czech arms and £200,000 in cash.⁶ These developments were of great concern to the Shah of Iran.

In late January 1957 Iran, together with its partners in the Baghdad Pact (Turkey, Pakistan and Iraq), endorsed the Eisenhower Doctrine.⁷ In pursuit of his policy of closer ties with pro-Western Arab states, the Shah paid a state visit to Lebanon in December 1957 and held what was described as 'Amity talks' with President Camille Chamoun.⁸ The two heads of state announced their intention to 'oppose any foreign intervention in the domestic affairs of their countries'.⁹ Significantly, Abdulhusayn Sharafeddin, the leading Shi'i cleric at the time, refused to meet the Shah on this occasion because he was opposed to the pro-Western policies of both the Shah and Chamoun.¹⁰

The creation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) through a union of Egypt and Syria in February 1958 increased tensions in Lebanon. Supporters of the UAR rioted in Tripoli in the second week of May; there were reports that the UAR flag had been raised in Tripoli and that the UAR had provided materiel for the rioters.¹¹ In May Chamoun asked Iran and Turkey to help counter the UAR's interference. He then accused the UAR of 'massive interference' in Lebanese affairs, and turned to the Arab League and the United Nations for help. The Arab League failed to resolve the crisis and, on 3 July, the United Nations announced that its Observation Group (UNOG) had failed to find any evidence of massive UAR infiltration.¹²

When Camille Chamoun asked for US marines to intervene and restore order,

6. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 1957–1958, p. 15696.
7. Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy 1941–1973: A Study of Foreign Policy in Modernizing Nations* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1975), pp. 277–8.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 399.
9. 'Summary of communiqué on the talks between President Chamoun and the Shah of Iran, Beirut, 23 December 1957', in Mohammad Shabi Agwani, ed., *The Lebanese Crisis, 1958: A Documentary Study* (Bombay: n.p., 1965), p. 29.
10. Hussein Gharbieh, personal communication, November 1996.
11. 'Special National Intelligence Estimate 36.4–58', 5 June 1958; in *FRUS*, 1958–60, v. XI, Lebanon and Jordan (Washington, DC, 1992), p. 94. Hart (Damascus) to Dulles, no. 2915, 13 May 1958; Middleton to Lloyd, 13 May 1958, no. 477, FO 371/134116; Beirut (Scott) to Lloyd, 9 July 1958, no. 956, FO 371/134127; Scott to Lloyd, 14 July 1958, no. 991, FO 371/134130; all in Attié, 'President Chamoun and the Crisis of 1958': 12–13.
12. *Keesing's*, 1957–1958, pp. 16182, 16295.

the Iranian government endorsed the Lebanese president's decision.¹³ The US marines landed on 15 July and the next day Iran, together with Turkey and Pakistan, sent a message of support to President Chamoun in which the three allies (the fourth ally, Iraq, was undergoing a violent revolution of its own) declared that this 'bold and appropriate decision of the United States will not only ensure the protection of the independence of Lebanon ... but will at the same time strengthen the determined position of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey'.¹⁴

The Shah supported Chamoun's belief that the Christians had an interest in opposing the Lebanese Sunnis, many of whom identified with Nasserism and Arab nationalism. Iranian aid consisted of the provision by SAVAK of small arms and ammunition to Chamoun and the Maronites. Egyptian arms captured by Israel were conveyed to Lebanon via Iran. Meat was also flown in from Turkey because the original supplies from Syria were no longer available. Ahmad Azima, a naval officer in SAVAK's foreign intelligence section, ran the entire operation. The head of Lebanese intelligence, Farid Chehab, served as Chamoun's intermediary, travelling frequently to Teheran for coordination purposes.¹⁵

On 14 July 1958 a military *coup d'état* brutally overthrew Iraq's pro-Western government. This turn of events added to Chamoun's worries, so he appealed to the United States for something more substantial than its earlier promise – as an acceleration of an existing programme – of small arms, ammunition and tear gas for riot suppression. Saudi Arabia's King Saud made similar demands on Chamoun's behalf.¹⁶ American assistance took the form of the amphibious landing of US Marines commencing on 15 July. This was not because of the intrinsic

13. The literature on the US intervention in 1958 is vast. See Irene L. Gendzier, *Notes from the Minefield: United State Intervention in Lebanon and the Middle East, 1945–1958* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 295–363; and Zachary Karabell, *Architects of Intervention: The United States, the Third World and the Cold War, 1946–1962* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), pp. 136–72.
14. US State Department, *Bulletin*, 39:997 (4 August 1958): 183, as quoted in Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy 1941–1973*, p. 280.
15. Information on the operation to provide aid to Chamoun is from an interview with SAVAK's then deputy-director for plans and chief of Middle East operations, Mojtaba Pasha'i (10 December 1992, Denmark) and a telephone interview with SAVAK director-general Teimur Bakhtiar's assistant for all expenditures and special operations, Hasan 'Alavi-Kia (17 December 1992).
16. 'Memorandum of Conference with President, White House, 14 July 1958', in *FRUS*, 5:11 (1958–1960): 212. It has been alleged that King Saud and Prince Faisal were on the CIA payroll. While Saud was hostile to Nasser, Faisal was actually sympathetic to Nasser, and although he took the CIA's money, he kept Nasser current on the intentions of Saud and the CIA. Leonard Mosley, *Dulles: A Biography of Eleanor, Allen and John Foster Dulles and their Family Network* (New York: Dial Press, 1978), pp. 348–51.

importance of Lebanon to Western policymakers;¹⁷ in fact the US commitment was made in full recognition that such an act might engender adverse publicity.¹⁸ American officials realized that if no action were taken their Middle Eastern allies would lose confidence in the value of their friendship with the United States. There was also concern that the unrest in Lebanon would spread to Jordan, furthering the isolation of Israel, Turkey and the Persian Gulf states.¹⁹

Sunnis in west Beirut, Tripoli and Sidon, as well as Kamal Jumblatt's Druze faction, had started the 1958 Lebanese crisis because they wanted a greater voice in national affairs. Until that time, according to Kamal Salibi, a predominantly Maronite 'business oligarchy' had dominated Lebanese politics and most of the top government jobs went to Christians. The rebels believed that they were qualified for public office and that they deserved a share of the state-condoned corruption that went with government positions.²⁰

Chamoun's efforts to retain power failed and, on 31 July 1958, army commander Fouad Chehab was elected to the presidency. After taking office, on 23 September, Chehab set about bringing new faces into Lebanese politics. The new president recognized the reasons behind the opposition to Christian domination of Lebanese politics and hoped to improve the Muslims' lot by increasing their representation in government – even if this meant Maronites having to give up some of their power. Chehab hoped that such actions would make the Muslims more loyal to the state and less receptive to Nasserism. Chehab's expansion of the political playing field and his refusal to use the army to suppress the anti-Chamounists by force earned him the enmity of many Christians, especially Chamoun, but gained him the cooperation of Musa Sadr who, as we saw in Chapter 6, used the new attitude in Beirut to advance his projects for southern Lebanon.

Events in Lebanon calmed down with the election of Chehab, but regional problems continued because of the Iraqi coup, for which the Shah also held Nasser responsible, declaring that Nasserism 'was an octopus, if one tentacle were severed others become even more active'.²¹ Only a month after the coup Iraq entered into a

17. Macmillan to Eisenhower, no. 4477, 15 July 1958, FO 371/134130, in Attié, p. 20.

18. State Department Memorandum of Conversation, 783A.00/6-2358, in *FRUS*, 5:11 (1958–1960): 173.

19. CAB 128/32 Pt 2, ff 325–6, CC55(58), Confidential Annex, 14 July 1958, in R. Owendale, 'Britain and the Anglo-American Invasion of Jordan and the Lebanon in 1958', paper presented at Conference on Lebanon in the 1950s, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, 11–12 September 1992, p. 9.

20. Kamal Suleiman Salibi, 'Lebanon under Fuad Chehab, 1958–1964', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 2 (April 1966): 213.

21. Quoted in Agnes G. Korbani, *US Intervention in Lebanon, 1958 and 1982* (New York: Praeger, 1991), p. 45.

defence agreement with the United Arab Republic and formally left the Baghdad Pact the next year. Iran's overt reaction to these events was to enter into an agreement with the United States, Great Britain, Pakistan and Turkey, thereby facilitating the formation of a new defence organization that would eventually become the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).²²

The Iraqi coup also alarmed Jordan's King Hussein, whose country had briefly federated with Iraq in early 1958. The first cause for alarm was the brutal killings of King Faisal II (King Hussein's cousin), Crown Prince Abdallah, Prime Minister Nuri al-Said, members of the royal household and the CIA's chief of station. A second cause for alarm arose when broadcasts over Radio Baghdad accused King Hussein of being a traitor and agent of imperialism and called on the Jordanian people to overthrow their king. The third was that the UAR was the first state to extend diplomatic recognition to the new Iraqi republic.

By 17 July King Hussein was sufficiently concerned to request 'effective military aid' from friendly countries to protect Jordan. The most obvious forms of aid came in the form of English paratroopers, petroleum products via US aircraft and, on 20 July, a gift of \$7.5 million from the USA.²³ Moreover, after Jordan lost access to its Iraqi fuel supplies and the Saudis refused to fill in, the country had to rely on fuel from Lebanon transported by aircraft flying over Israel. This led King Hussein to comment: 'Where an Arab nation refused an enemy agreed.'²⁴

A less obvious form of assistance came in the form of a journey to Jordan by SAVAK chief Brigadier General Teimur Bakhtiar and his assistants to meet King Hussein and discuss plans to restore the Iraqi monarchy.²⁵ King Hussein asked SAVAK to assign an officer to Amman and the Iranians agreed on the grounds that this would help solidify the two countries' relations. Colonel Ali Mo'tazed, who was already stationed in Amman as a military attaché, was the officer chosen for this assignment.²⁶ The combination of assistance from his allies and his own

22. 'Multilateral Declaration Respecting the Baghdad Pact (28 July 1958), 9 United States Treaties and Other International Agreements 1077', in Yonah Alexander and A. Nanes, eds, *The US and Iran: A Documentary History* (Fredrick, Md: Aletheia Books, 1980), p. 305.

23. *Keesing's*, 1957–58, pp. 16308–9. British paratroopers had also overflown Israel to get to Jordan; see CAB 128/32 Part 2, p. 348, CC60(58), Confidential Annex, 17 July 1958; PREM 11/2377, FO to Tel Aviv, Telegram no. 366, 18 July 1958; T288/58, FO to Tel Aviv, Telegram no. 356, 17 July 1958; T289/58, Salt to FO, Telegram no. 327, 17 July 1958; all in Owendale, p. 19.

24. HM King Hussein of Jordan, *Uneasy Lies the Head* (London: Bernard Geiss Associates, 1962), p. 168.

25. Interview with Pasha'i (10 December 1992, Denmark); telephone interview with Pejman (17 December 1992).

26. US Army Weekly Update, 26 June 1959, 788.00 (W)/6-2659, Box 3814, Record

actions greatly strengthened King Hussein's position on both the domestic and international stages.²⁷

In an attempt to restore the Iraqi monarchy, SAVAK's foreign intelligence chief Colonel Hasan Pakravan organized another less publicized scheme whereby SAVAK chief Teimur Bakhtiar and two assistants travelled to Beirut once a month to meet military, civilian, Sunni and Shi'i Iraqi exiles. The officer in charge of SAVAK's Kurdish operations also travelled to Lebanon to meet Iraqi Kurds there.²⁸ As R. K. Ramazani put it, events in Iraq were 'viewed with great alarm elsewhere. But neither Iran nor any other like-minded regional or Western power could do much else'.²⁹ The Shah did not, however, stand by idly; he ordered Bakhtiar to come up with a more comprehensive scheme for containing Nasserism. The result was *Tarh-e sabz*, a 'Green Plan' designed to contain and then roll back the danger of Nasserism.

SAVAK's foreign intelligence chief Hasan Pakravan called the meeting to discuss the plan. At this meeting, which Bakhtiar, Pakravan, their deputies and Major Mojtaba Pasha'i, chief of Middle East operations, attended, Pasha'i stated that 'we should combat and arrest the danger [of Nasserism] on the beaches of the Mediterranean so we do not have to shed blood on Iranian soil'.³⁰ He saw Lebanon as the only democratic Arab state, a country where all religions had a political identity and where there was intellectual freedom, as the universities exemplified. Lebanon was also important because of its banks, ports and its role as an aerial transit point.

Pasha'i was keen to have the Lebanese populace identify more closely with Iran so as to weaken pro-Arab tendencies. He favoured building on existing Muslim ties, particularly with the Shi'is. Pasha'i mentioned that the Shi'i community was undergoing changes of which the Iranian government could take advantage. Although clans had dominated Shi'i politics, in the late 1950s political parties like the communists, Ba'ath, Movement of Arab Nationalists, the PSP and the Syrian Social National Party had begun to attract younger Shi'i males. At the same time younger Shi'is began to head for Beirut, which diminished the importance of land-based wealth and traditional *beys*.³¹ The government's educational system also had

Group-59, NA.

27. For a thorough discussion of events in Jordan, see Lawrence Tal, 'Britain and the Jordan Crisis of 1958', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 31:1 (January 1995).

28. Letter from Colonel I. Pejman, reprinted in Dr Muẓaffar Alamūtī, *Irān dar 'aṣr-i Pahlavī*, vol. 11, *Jang-i qudrat dar Īrān* (London: Paka Print, 1992), p. 521; interviews with Pejman (15 October 1992, Paris) and Pasha'i (10 December 1992, Denmark); telephone interview with Pasha'i (19 December 1992).

29. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-1973*, p. 283.

30. Interview with Pasha'i, 10 December 1992, Denmark.

31. On the landowners' political system, see Arnold Hottinger, 'Zu'ama and Parties in the Lebanese Crisis of 1958', *Middle East Journal*, 15:2 (Spring 1961). On the social

an urbanizing effect, for it made rural Lebanese feel dissatisfied with their lot in life and eager to use their new skills. Lebanese of all religions left the countryside and suburbs sprang up around all the major cities.³² Pasha'i believed that the Iranian government was too close to the Lebanese Christians and that the friendship of the Shah and of the Iranian ambassador to Lebanon Ahmad Atabaki with Chamoun was the only reason for this. It was then decided to assign air force officer Hamid Naseri as SAVAK chief of station (COS) to Beirut.

Under SAVAK's Green Plan the Iranian government started to contribute approximately \$33,000 a year to the Lebanese Shi'i community, which altered the relationship between the Shah, the Iranian Shi'i establishment and the Lebanese Shi'i community. Until then the Shah had given money to Ayatollah Mohammad Hosein Borujerdi, the *marja'-e taqlid* (source of emulation), via the Pahlavi Foundation (*Bonyad-e Pahlavi*) and Borujerdi had directed it to Lebanon.³³ Under the Green Plan, SAVAK's new COS Naseri distributed about 80 per cent of the money directly to Shi'i schools in Lebanon, while the rest was given to individual Lebanese ulema as gifts in cash or goods. The recipients knew that SAVAK was the source of this money but, because the organization did not have the notoriety it later acquired, they felt no compunctions about accepting it. The Green Plan was not just Lebanon-specific. Under the guise of teachers, SAVAK officers were sent to Syria to give classes on the Persian language and Iranian culture and history. Connections were made with other Shi'i communities, such as the one in Iraq. Sizeable contributions were sent to Najaf (about \$520,000 a year in 1959 and 1960). The Shah also tried to influence the selection of a successor to Ayatollah Borujerdi, who died in 1961. There was a growing consensus in favour of Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim in Najaf, and it was believed that the Shah was encouraging this choice as in his opinion the influence of Shi'i clerics in Iranian affairs would be reduced if an Arab living in Iraq became the supreme leader of the Shi'i community.³⁴

To prepare for such contingencies as unrest in Lebanon, the Shah had also strengthened his ties with Israel, one of the few non-Arab states in the region. Bakhtiar met the Israeli ambassador in Paris in September 1957, and Mossad chief Isser Harel in Rome in October. During these meetings Bakhtiar offered Iranian

changes, see Fuad I. Khuri, 'The Changing Class Structure in Lebanon', *Middle East Journal*, 23:1 (Winter 1969).

32. President Chehab had also recognized these Shi'a-specific issues, and a public-works programme was devised for the Shi'i regions.

33. Information on the Green Plan is from: Pejman letter, in Alamuti, v. 11, pp. 521-3; interviews with Pejman (15 October 1992, Paris) and Pasha'i (10 December 1992, Denmark); letter from Pasha'i to the author (26 April 1993).

34. 'Some Comments on Recent Religious Agitation in Iran', Department of State Airgram A-404, 29 December 1962, 788.00/12-2962, [FOIA]].

cooperation in the struggle against Nasser. In December 1957 a Mossad officer was sent to Teheran to engage in practical talks on establishing a strategic relationship between Iran and Israel.³⁵ From that time onwards, Israel and Iran exchanged intelligence on Egyptian activities in the Arab world and participated in some joint operations.³⁶ In late-1958 Iran, Turkey and Israel formed an intelligence-exchange called Trident.³⁷

Back in Lebanon parliamentary elections were scheduled for June and July 1960. Being concerned about Chehab's support for Arab nationalism outside Lebanon, and possibly encouraged by Chamoun, SAVAK's leaders decided that it would be highly desirable for Iran if several anti-Nasserist deputies were elected. Such importance did SAVAK attach to these elections that it authorized spending whatever was necessary, which in the end came to about \$330,000.³⁸

Many Christian Lebanese believed that they and the Shi'is had a joint interest in opposing the Sunni Muslims, and that the two groups together could resist an alliance between the Nasserist Sunnis and the Palestinians in the refugee camps.³⁹ The mostly Christian Kataeb party was interested in preserving the political status quo of the Lebanese state and was threatened by Chehab's promise to bring more Muslims into national politics. The Kataeb, therefore, had been supportive of Chamounist elements during the 1958 crisis and had staged a revolt in east Beirut after Chehab came to power. And so the party was chosen as the main recipient of Iranian aid.⁴⁰ SAVAK COS Naseri offered financial aid to Kataeb leader Pierre Gemayel, who requested \$100,000. While the money was being prepared, however, Gemayel had a change of heart and indicated that the money was no longer

35. Interviews with Caroz and Harel, as quoted in Shmuel Segev, *The Iranian Triangle: The Untold Story of Israel's Role in the Iran-Contra Affair* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), pp. 31–2.

36. CIA, 'Israel', *Asnād-i lānah-yi jāsūsī* [the documents stolen from the US embassy in Tehran in 1979], vol. 11, p. 24.

37. State Department telegram, 4 May 1958, *FRUS*, 1958–1960, v. XI, Lebanon and Jordan, p. 29; CIA Survey, 'Israel: Foreign Intelligence and Security Services, March 1979', *Asnād*, vol. 11, p. 24.

38. Pejman letter, in Alamuti, v. 11, p. 524; interview with Pasha'i (10 December 1992, Denmark).

39. Kamal Suleiman Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War: Lebanon 1958–1976* (London: Ithaca Press, 1976), p. 10.

40. Information on aid to the Kataeb is from Pejman letter, in Alamuti, v. 11, p. 524; and is confirmed by Pasha'i (10 December 1992, Denmark). On the Kataeb, see Francis Stoakes, 'The Supervigilantes: The Lebanese Kataeb Party as a Builder, Surrogate and Defender of the State', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 11 (January 1975): 224; and J. P. Entelis, 'Structural Change and Organizational Development in the Lebanese Kata'ib Party', *Middle East Journal*, 27:1 (Winter 1973): 28.

required. Nevertheless, the Kataeb continued to maintain close relations with Iran, with Gemayel often attending Iranian embassy social functions and his party usually fulfilling the Iranian government's requests.⁴¹

The Kataeb were not the only recipients of Iranian largess. Bakhtiar personally hand delivered \$50,000 to Camille Chamoun, despite objections from the former's subordinates who knew that Chamoun had sold many of the arms that Iran and Israel had donated and that he had kept the proceeds. The friendship of right-wing Armenian Dashnak party candidates was won with a promise to allow flights from Armenia to Lebanon the right to pass over Iran, as well as easier transit for Armenians between Iran and Lebanon. SAVAK also helped to print and distribute Dashnak campaign literature.⁴² Iranian Armenians benefited too, for they were given permission to build several new churches.

Raymond Eddé's Bloc National was also a recipient of SAVAK generosity. Though Eddé himself was never offered any money because he and Pierre Gemayel were running for the same seat, many of the party's candidates took the money they were offered and SAVAK helped fund some of their publicity.⁴³ SAVAK also recommended helping the SSNP, which was seen as a tough and combatant group that would be receptive to an approach by the Iranians because it had received Iraqi aid before the 1958 coup and had sided with the Chamounists during the 1958 crisis. But the Shah refused to permit dealings with the SSNP, for he objected to their anti-monarchist stance and idea of a Greater-Syria.⁴⁴ Ironically, Chamounist candidates did relatively poorly in the elections, while the Kataeb did quite well: Pierre Gemayel himself became the minister of finance in the new government. Four Dashnak candidates were elected. The communists, Ba'athists and SSNP all failed to win any seats.⁴⁵

At about this time (late 1959) Musa Sadr arrived in Lebanon in response to an invitation from south Lebanon's Shi'i community to replace the Shi'i leader of

41. Pejman letter, in Alamuti, v. 11, p. 524; interview with Pasha'i (10 December 1992, Denmark); Stoakes, 'The Supervigilantes': 233.

42. The Dashnaks have a history of cooperating with Iranians. See Houri Berberian, 'The Dashnaksutun and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1905–1911', *Iranian Studies*, 29:1–2 (Winter/Spring 1996): 7–34.

43. Telephone interviews with Pasha'i (19 December 1992) and 'Alavi-Kia (17 December 1992).

44. Interview with Pasha'i (24 June 1993, Denmark). In December 1961 a group of military and civilian SSNP supporters attempted a coup. They were stopped by loyal troops, and the next day the government had the party dissolved. There were rumours of an Iranian hand behind the SSNP revolt, but the Iranians proclaimed their innocence and suspected the Jordanians. Interview with Pasha'i (24 June 1993, Denmark).

45. *Keesing's*, 1959–1960, pp. 17556 and 17571.

Tyre, Sayyid Abdulhusayn Sharafeddin, who had died two and a half years earlier (December 1957). Sadr often referred to the move as a return to his roots because his family originated in Lebanon, but he also claimed that Sayyid Abdulhusayn had referred to him as a worthy successor.⁴⁶ However, since the Shi'is of Lebanon and Musa Sadr are discussed in other chapters, I shall refer to Sadr here only in the context of his role in Iranian security and intelligence operations.

There have been suggestions that General Bakhtiar encouraged Sadr to take over from the deceased Sayyid Abdulhusayn. When Bakhtiar heard that the Lebanese Shi'is were searching for a new leader he presumably met Sayyid Naseruddin, the deceased leader's son who had been studying in Qom, with a view to him returning as his father's replacement so that he could help strengthen the Shi'i community and promote ties with Iran. However, when one of Sadr's relatives got word of this, he approached Bakhtiar with the counter-suggestion that he should promote Sayyid Musa instead. Bakhtiar met Sayyid Musa and was favourably impressed, as was Sayyid Musa with the idea of going to Lebanon. This does not imply that Sadr was recruited as a SAVAK agent; it was traditional at the time for high-ranking Iranian officials to maintain ties with members of the religious community. Furthermore, there was a coincidence of interests: Iran sought greater influence in Lebanon and Sadr, as we saw in Chapter 6, found the atmosphere in Najaf stifling and welcomed the opportunity to find more freedom of action in Lebanon.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Hasan Alavi-Kia, at the time SAVAK chief Teimur Bakhtiar's assistant for all expenditures and special operations, and Mojtaba Pasha'i, SAVAK's chief of Middle East operations and then the Beirut COS, denied any knowledge of a meeting between Bakhtiar and Sadr.

In the first few years after his arrival, Sadr set out to provide practical assistance to the local community by teaching at schools and at a university, by revitalizing a religious and charitable foundation founded by Sayyid Sharafeddin,

46. Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 104; Majed Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shia Community* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), p. 124.

47. This allegation was related in confidential interviews with two individuals who had heard it from a member of Sadr's family (16 October 1992 and 30 December 1992). Two other sources claim that after meeting with Bakhtiar, Sadr underwent a four-week training course and was given 1500–2500 Lebanese lira; see the reminiscences of M. Qader, (30 April and 4 May 1986, Washington, DC), in the Oral History of Iran Collection of the Foundation for Iranian Studies, and Anonymous, 'Sayyid Mūsā Sadr kih būd?', *Ilm va Jāma'ah*, 6:40 (July–August 1985): 42. A later article dismissed such claims, saying that Sadr was extremely popular and was given many gifts by his followers, so he had absolutely no need for such payments; Mugh, 'Zindagī va nāpadīd shudan-i Mūsā Šadr', *Ilm va Jāma'ah*, 7:42 (February–March 1986): 45.

and by raising money for an orphanage in Tyre. Sadr established a sewing school and nursery, as well as the Institute of Islamic Studies.⁴⁸

Sadr also stayed in contact with SAVAK. He never met SAVAK COS Naseri, for their time in Beirut only overlapped by two months, but he frequently met Naseri's successor Colonel Pasha'i. Pasha'i was stationed in Beirut from 20 November 1960 to 20 December 1963 and during that time they met about once a week. During this period Pasha'i served as Sadr's entrée to the Lebanese political elite, a portion of society to which a Shi'i cleric normally would not have access. Although he accepted such help from Pasha'i, Sadr never asked the Iranian government for money. In fact, in 1962 Sadr was offered some money to use in whatever way he saw fit, but he declined the offer of a direct payment, recommending instead a continuation of the cultural approach such as sending teachers, helping schools and building hospitals.⁴⁹

The SAVAK station in Beirut also maintained contact with Lebanese newspapers and magazines through Fariborz Farzaneh, a SAVAK officer with diplomatic cover as press attaché.⁵⁰ All the Arabic-language newspapers that SAVAK personnel approached made direct requests for money. The one exception was *al-Hayat*, whose strongly anti-Nasser publisher, Kamal Muroeh, also ran the English-language *Daily Star*. Although Muroeh did not receive any direct payments to print anti-Nasser articles, SAVAK bought his newspapers and distributed them in the Persian Gulf region. In July 1960 Muroeh's offices were bombed after he printed an article criticizing Nasser for breaking relations with Iran over the Shah's announcement of *de facto* recognition of Israel. At this point, SAVAK gave Muroeh approximately \$15,000 as compensation for the risk and the damage.

The SAVAK station had particularly good relations with two French-language publications, *L'Orient* and *Le Soir*, and these were willing to print articles provided by SAVAK. These articles emphasized Nasser's expansionism and quest for hegemony, saying that these were a result of Egypt's internal economic problems. Such articles also sought to sow discord between the more radical Arab states of Egypt, Syria and Iraq. No person-to-person money transfers took place, but SAVAK did favours for the newspapers, such as placing advertisements or buying up several thousand copies and distributing them in Lebanon, Jordan and the Persian Gulf.⁵¹

48. Interview with Pāshā'i (10 December 1992, Denmark); Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied*, pp. 135–6. See also Michael Johnson, 'Factional Politics in Lebanon: The Case of the "Islamic Society of Benevolent Intentions" (Al-Maqasid) in Beirut', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 14:1 (January 1978).

49. Interview with Pasha'i (10 December 1992, Denmark); letter from Pasha'i to the author (26 April 1993).

50. Interview with Pasha'i (10 December 1992, Denmark) and telephone interview with Farzaneh (18 April 1994).

51. Interview with Pasha'i (24 June 1993, Denmark).

THE LEBANESE SHI'IS AND THE IRANIAN OPPOSITION: 1964-70

In 1964 Sadr established the Burj al-Shimali technical institute with funding from Shi'i benefactors, bank loans and the Lebanese ministry of education. His approach to the Iranian embassy for financial assistance was rebuffed because the Shah was not feeling very charitable towards the religious elements, it being so soon after the riots of June 1963. Publicly, both the Shah and SAVAK chief General Pakravan blamed President Nasser for these riots, but a number of clerics were arrested for playing a leading role in them.⁵² In fact, Nasser persuaded the rector of al-Azhar, Shaykh Mahmud Shaltut, to cable the Shah and request the release of the imprisoned clerics.⁵³

At that time, furthermore, Sadr was one of several ulema to sign a letter to the Shah objecting to several Iranian governmental policies such as women's enfranchisement, ties with Israel and land reform. When confronted with this Sadr assured the embassy of his continued loyalty and said that he had only been trying to strengthen his credibility with the Shi'i clergy.⁵⁴ Yet this letter would be used against him later and it would be combined with allegations that he had spoken very disrespectfully of the Shah.

Further allegations that Sadr was involved in a plot against the Shah cast even more doubt on the former's protestations of loyalty. He allegedly took part in a meeting at Beirut's Coral Beach Hotel at which Teimur Bakhtiar (who had been forcibly retired), SAVAK's COS Pasha'i, the Iranian embassy's third secretary Parviz Atabaki and one of Ayatollah Khomeini's representatives were present. At this meeting it had allegedly been decided to use a million dollars, which Nasser had donated to Iran, to sponsor the demonstrations. SAVAK then recalled Pasha'i and Atabaki, but when challenged they both emphatically denied the allegation.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, Pasha'i lost his position to Mansur Qader, a SAVAK officer who had previously served in Beirut and who stayed on as COS until 1967.⁵⁶

52. On the role played by the religious community in the 1963 riots, see 'Politico-Economic Assessment: Iran: March-September, 1963', Department of State Airgram A-231, 8 October 1963 (FOIA); and on the arrests of clerics, see 'Year-End Report on the Political Situation in Iran', Department of State Airgram A-361, 31 December 1963, p. 7 (FOIA). On the suggestion that Nasser was behind the unrest, see *New York Times*, 6 June 1963, p. 1; and *The Times* (of London) 6 June 1963, p. 12.

53. *Chronology of Arab Politics*, 1:2 (April-June 1963): 170, quoted in Shahram Chubin and Sepehr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran: A Developing State in a Zone of Great-Power Conflict* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1974), p. 146.

54. Interview with Pasha'i (10 December 1992, Denmark).

55. See 'Sayyid Mūsā Šadr kih būd?', p. 44. Atabaki described the questioning he underwent in a letter in the author's possession.

56. In 1958, Qader transferred to SAVAK from army intelligence and was assigned to

The Iranian government continued trying to influence Lebanese governmental affairs. However, the Iranians' favourite candidates did badly in the elections that took place between 5 April and 3 May 1964. Camille Chamoun failed to get re-elected to parliament, but Gemayel managed to retain his east Beirut seat with backing from his own Kataeb and the Dashnaks. Chehab's term had ended and, in the balloting for the presidency, Pierre Gemayel received only five votes while Charles Hélou got ninety-two. It has been asserted that Gemayel had become President Chehab's principal Maronite ally and that Chehab had favoured Gemayel for presidential office.⁵⁷ But Hélou in fact followed policies similar to Chehab's.

During this period members of the Iranian opposition to the Shah began to arrive in Lebanon. Inspired by the armed struggles taking place around the world, younger members of Iran's opposition movements decided to achieve their goals by becoming more clandestine and violent. The activities of these groups in Lebanon are discussed in detail in Chapter 8; suffice it to note here that their being there rendered an Iranian intelligence presence in Lebanon even more desirable for the Iranian government. But this became more difficult when, on 2 April 1969, diplomatic ties between Teheran and Beirut were broken when General Bakhtiar, who had arrived in Lebanon the previous year, was arrested and gaoled for gun-running. The Iranian government sought his extradition to face 1967 charges of making an illegal fortune while heading SAVAK. In September 1969 he was tried in absentia and sentenced to death for treason. The Lebanese did not extradite him and he was allowed to leave the country on 4 April 1969.⁵⁸ During Bakhtiar's stay

Department II (Foreign Intelligence Collection). He was given diplomatic cover as first secretary and assigned to the Iranian embassy in Damascus. In 1961, he was made chief of the Middle East branch in Department II. About one year later he was made chief of Department II and stayed in this slot until late-1963. He returned to Beirut in 1964 and stayed until 1967. From June 1967 to 1971/2, Qader served as SAVAK COS in Jordan with diplomatic cover as Iran's ambassador. Biographical information and information on Qader's SAVAK career was secured in the reminiscences of Qader in FIS, confidential interviews with four SAVAK department chiefs, two COSs, two other SAVAK officers, two retired CIA officers, and one MFA official. An abbreviated version of Qader's biography is presented in *Zuhūr va suqūt-i salṭanat-i Pahlavī*, vol. 2, *Justārḥā'i az tārikh-i mu'āšir-i Īrān* (Teheran: Ittīlā'āt, 1990), p. 479. A sanitized version can be found in *Iran Who's Who*, third edition (Teheran: Echo of Iran, 1976), p. 426. Qader declined three requests for an interview, once in May 1992 and twice in October 1992.

57. Interview with Munah Solh in Wade R. Goria, *Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon 1943-1976* (London: Ithaca Press, 1985), p. 75.

58. *Keesing's*, 1969-1970, pp. 23297, 23580; Assadollah Alam, *The Shah and I: The Confidential Diary of Iran's Royal Court, 1969-1977*, Alinaqi Alikhani, ed., (London: I.B.Tauris, 1991), pp. 38 and 62. Another account has it that relations were broken when three employees of Lebanon's general security directorate were suspected of

in Beirut Ahmad Tabataba'i Qomi, a friend of his who was also a relative of Sadr's, arranged for Bakhtiar and Sadr to meet,⁵⁹ but nothing came of the meeting because SAVAK agents assassinated Bakhtiar in 1970.

HOW TO GAIN ENEMIES AND LOSE INFLUENCE: 1970–1979

In 1971 the Shah decided to restore relations with Lebanon in an attempt to gather support in the light of Britain's impending withdrawal from the region.⁶⁰ Formal relations were resumed on 16 July 1971 shortly after Camille Chamoun met the Shah in Teheran. The first Iranian ambassador to Beirut after the resumption of relations was Rokneddin Ashtiani, a career diplomat,⁶¹ but Major General Mansur Qader quickly replaced him and served as ambassador until November 1978. Qader also assumed the position of SAVAK COS, replacing a man who has been identified as Colonel Abbas Shafaqi.

Musa Sadr visited Iran from November 1971 to February 1972 and, on this trip, he asked the Shah for \$30 million towards building a hospital and university complex. It was decided that the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and the Red Lion and Sun Society (Iranian Red Cross) would donate the money. Qader, however, wanted it to come from the foreign ministry, which would put it under his control, allowing him to dispense it at his leisure (and perhaps take a cut). He also insisted on naming the hospital after the Shah, which Sadr did not want to do. The Shah insisted that the hospital and university project get underway immediately.⁶²

Qader then decided that Sadr and he should form a case officer/agent relationship, purportedly to give SAVAK better intelligence on the opposition. However, fearing the effect of this on his standing among the Lebanese, Sadr refused. He did not want to be associated with SAVAK, whose name had become synonymous with torture and repression.⁶³ Sadr's rewarded his stubbornness by withdrawing his

giving information to SAVAK; see Yaacov Caroz, *The Arab Secret Services* (London: Transworld Publishers, 1975), p. 355.

59. Ihsan Narāqī, *Ān hikāyathā: Guftugū va naqd-i Hurmuz Kay bā Ihsan Narāqī* (Teheran: Intishārāt-i Jāmi'a-yi Īrān, 1381/2002), p. 124.

60. R. K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy*, p. 420.

61. Ashtiani was related to Musa Sadr by marriage. See *Yārān-i Imām bah rivāyat-i asnād-i Sāvāk: Āyat Allāh Imām Mūsā Šadr*, vol. 1 (Markaz-i barrasī-y asnād-i tārikhī-yi vizārat-i ittilā'āt, 2000), p. 344.

62. On the proposed hospital and the Shah's reaction to Qader's interference, see Alam, *The Shah and I*, p. 301. Information on the proposed breakdown of funding sources is from confidential interviews with a SAVAK department head (29 October 1992) and a SAVAK officer serving in Beirut at the time (16 October 1992). The naming issue is revealed in Narāqī, *Ān hikāyathā*, p. 124.

63. Information on Sadr's refusal is from interviews with SAVAK officer Hushang

Iranian citizenship.⁶⁴ From now on Qader would send negative reports about Sadr to Teheran, making much of his meeting with Bakhtiar, and some people in Iran's foreign service blamed him for the deterioration of Sadr's relations with the Iranian government, which harmed Iranian interests in Lebanon.⁶⁵

By 1974 the Shah was considering withdrawing support for the Lebanese Shi'is and Sadr. Sadr's behaviour had not been living up to the expectations of the Shah, who believed that Iraq and Libya were financing him. The Shah decided to give Sadr one last chance to sever his contacts with countries hostile to Iran.⁶⁶ But Sadr refused, whereupon Qader tried (but failed) to have him replaced as head of the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council by Sayyid Husayn Shirazi, an Iraqi-born cleric who had been expelled from Najaf by the Ba'athist regime.

Sadr's political standing in Lebanon improved from 1974 to 1976. By September 1975 Lebanon was in a state of civil war, with clashes between the Kataeb, the PLO, conservative Christians, left-wing Muslims, the Druzes and the Shi'is. As the civil war worsened, Sadr became increasingly critical of Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt and of the PLO. His criticisms were not well received: he was accused of being a US agent and in the summer of 1976 several attempts were reportedly made on his life.⁶⁷ Sadr also became openly hostile to the Iranian government. He

Mo'inzadeh (16 October 1992), the Cairo COS (27 October 1992), and two SAVAK department chiefs (24 October 1992 and 29 October 1992). See also, A. R. Nūrīzādah, 'Imām Mūsā Šadr, in imām-i ghā'ib-i hādīr', *Rūzigār-i Naw*, 5:7 (July–August 1986): 47; and a memorandum of conversation dated 25 Day 1352 (15 January 1973) in *Yārān-i Imām bah rivāyat-i asnād-i Sāvāk: Āyat Allāh Imām Mūsā Šadr*, p. 477.

64. From sources in the previous footnote. The withdrawal of citizenship or suspension of passports was a common SAVAK method of dealing with expatriate Iranians who were believed to be opposed to the Pahlavi regime. They would be kept out of Iran so that their ideas could not spread to the general population. All that this tactic really accomplished was further irritation of the person whose passport was being held. For a discussion of this tactic, see the interview with Hasan 'Alavi-Kia by Habib Ladjevardi, 1 March 1983, Paris, Iranian Oral History Collection, Harvard University.

65. Narāqī, *Ān hikāyathā*, p. 125. In 1978 a foreign ministry inquiry revealed financial corruption on the part of Qader, whereupon the Shah recalled him. In late 1978, when Khomeini was already in Paris, some members of Musa Sadr's family asked the Iranian embassy in Paris for Iranian passports and the Shah ordered his diplomats to comply. He also offered them money, but they refused to take it. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

66. Alam, *The Shah and I*, p. 366. The belief that Sadr may have received Iraqi money in early 1974 is repeated in Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), p. 41.

67. Paul Theroux, *The Strange Disappearance of Imam Moussa Sadr* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1987), p. 41. See also Raphael Calis, 'The Shiite Pimpernel', *The Middle East* (November 1978): 52.

accused the Shah of suppressing religion in Iran, criticized his pro-Israel stance and called him an 'imperialist stooge'.⁶⁸ When Ali Shariati, the oppositionist ideologue, died in 1977, Sayyid Musa officiated at his burial at Zaynabiyya, the tomb of Imam Husayn's sister in Damascus.⁶⁹

While the Shah's relations with Sadr deteriorated inexorably, his ties with Sadr's Shi'i enemies, the traditional notables, remained intact. In early January 1976 Alam, the Shah's minister of Court and closest confidant, received a visit from the Lebanese ambassador to Iran, Khalil al-Khalil, accompanied by his father who had been secretary-general of Camille Chamoun's Liberal Party. The elder al-Khalil brought a message from President Franjeh and another from the four leading Shi'i families (Osseiran, Hemadeh, al-Khalil and As'ad) begging the Shah to help them in their struggle against the Palestinians.⁷⁰ The Shah and Alam, however, were pessimistic about the Lebanese situation and had more or less given it up as lost.⁷¹ Nonetheless, when the United Nations established a force to safeguard south Lebanon after the Israeli invasion of early 1978, Iran provided troops for it. But when Iranian troops arrived in Lebanon as part of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in the spring, a number of them were SAVAK personnel charged with 'identifying and isolating' Sayyid Musa's Iranian followers.⁷² The troops were withdrawn in October. Iran also helped Kamil al-As'ad raise a Christian and Shi'i militia to supplement the Maronite forces of Major Saad Haddad, who was working with the Israelis.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have examined how the Shah of Iran tried to influence Lebanese security matters via SAVAK, his secret policy instrument. The potential for success of these political operations is dubious. From the 1958 provision of military aid to Chamoun, they were geared mainly towards helping conservative Christian politicians win office, but from 1958 onwards other Lebanese communities were

68. Norton, *The Amal and Shi'a*, p. 41.

69. For details see Chapter 6, p. 159.

70. 'Alīnaqī 'Ālikhānī, ed., *Yaddāshthā-yi 'Alam*, vol. 5 (Bethesda, Md: IBEX, n.d.), p. 378.

71. Ibid., pp. 288, 306, 319, 396. Alam followed the Lebanese dossier and the involvement of outside powers in the civil war closely and concluded, quoting the Koran (9:97), that *al-A'rāb ashadd kufran wa nifāq*, which means 'The desert Arabs are the worst in disbelief and hypocrisy', but, given the slightly different meanings of Arab loan-words in Persian, means 'The Arabs are the worst in disbelief and dissension' to the average Iranian. (p. 496).

72. Information on UNIFIL and SAVAK is from J. K. Cooley, 'Shah promotes security in Lebanon', *Christian Science Monitor*, 19 April 1998, p. 7, and a confidential interview with a SAVAK department chief (10 February 1993).

demanding and gaining a greater voice in national affairs. This expansion was initiated by President Chehab and was continued, albeit more modestly, by Presidents Hélou and Franjeh.

SAVAK's Green Plan, as it was first conceived, aimed to discourage Lebanese Shi'is from supporting Nasser and pan-Arabism by winning their loyalty through providing money, teachers, schools and perhaps even a religious leader. Musa Sadr gained the support of the Lebanese Shi'i community – the fastest growing and most rapidly changing section of the Lebanese population – and in this sense the Green Plan seemed destined for success. Although it cannot be stated definitely, in the long run the Green Plan probably would have succeeded in discouraging pan-Arab and Nasserist sentiments among the majority of the Lebanese population for the very reason that the Shi'i community was growing larger and was gaining a political voice through Sadr and Amal.

By the 1970s the Shah needed intelligence on the Iranian opposition being trained in Lebanon. Sayyid Musa could have been a very useful source of intelligence and agent of influence in dealing with the opposition. With the withdrawal of his citizenship and Qader's interference, however, Sadr's potential use to the Iranian government was lost. Instead, the Shah, in an attempt to stifle opposition to his rule, was forced to work closely with the Christian and Shi'i elites. But these elites, however, were becoming increasingly marginalized in Lebanese politics and it became evident that the new players (the PLO and Shi'i groups) were the ones that were active in aiding the Iranian opposition. The poor relationship with Sadr, the absence of good sources of intelligence in the Palestinian and Shi'i communities and the embassy's general mishandling of intelligence contributed to SAVAK's failure to counter the armed opposition that eventually overthrew the Shah of Iran. In this sense, it can be said that the security relationship between Iran and Lebanon failed to achieve the desired results.⁷³

73. The primary sources of information in this study are government archives and interviews with individuals involved in the issues. Information from diplomatic archives was secured either at the British PRO, US NA, US LOC, FRUS, or through the FOIA. Information from interviews was secured in meetings with SAVAK officers with duties that touched directly on this issue, an Iranian military intelligence officer stationed in Iraq, and two retired CIA officers with duties in Iran and/or Lebanon. Some of these sources have requested anonymity due to the sensitivity of this subject. Unless otherwise noted, any information secured in interviews has been corroborated by at least one other source.

The Anti-Shah Opposition and Lebanon

H. E. Chehabi

Given Lebanon's exceptionally open politics compared with other Middle Eastern states, the country has always attracted a wide variety of intellectuals and political dissidents from elsewhere in the region, including Iran.¹ While Iranian exile politics in Lebanon was at its height in the 1960s and 1970s, the ground for this activity was prepared in the 1920s when, after the failure of a largely Shi'i anti-British uprising in Iraq, many Shi'i ulema, including some Iranians, went to Lebanon with their families.² One of the Shi'i ulema to participate in the uprising was Iranian-born Ayatollah Abolqasem Kashani (1882–1962) who became an important figure in Iranian politics after the Second World War. He organized a large demonstration against the founding of the state of Israel in the spring of 1948 and, accused of being a ringleader of an unsuccessful assassination attempt on the Shah in early 1949, he was arrested and exiled to Lebanon. Here he lived in Baalbek, frequently visited by both Iranian and Iraqi admirers, until he was elected to parliament in Iran and the government had to allow him to return in 1950.³ He went on to become a major ally of Prime Minister Mosaddeq in the struggle to nationalize Iranian oil, but broke with him in 1952,⁴ which facilitated the coup against Mosaddeq in 1953.

1. For an evocation of that cosmopolitan milieu see Samir Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), Chapter 12: 'Disinherited Liberals: Ras-Beirut in Jeopardy'.
2. On this revolt, provoked by British policies in both Iraq and Iran, see Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 66–72.
3. *Rūḥānī-yi mubārīz, Āyat Allāh Kāshānī, bah rivāyat-i asnād*, vol. 1 (Teheran: Markaz-i barrasī-yi asnād-i tārikhī-yi vizārat-i Īttilā'āt, 1379/2000), pp. 18, 19, 50, 51, 54, 96.
4. Yann Richard, 'Ayatollah Kashani: Precursor of the Islamic Republic?', in Nikki R. Keddie, ed., *Religion and Politics in Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983),

Many Middle Eastern regimes maintained support networks of various kinds in Lebanon – sympathetic political parties, factions within the Palestine Liberation Organization, newspapers and secret agents. The existence of various networks allowed enterprising opponents of the Shah to find support for their activities, but it also allowed Lebanese politicians to manoeuvre between groups, trying to play off different outside powers against each other. The experience of Teimur Bakhtiar, founding head of the Shah's secret police (SAVAK), is a case in point. He had studied with his first cousin Shapur Bakhtiar in Beirut in the 1930s. Then, as one of Iran's most powerful men in the late 1950s, he aroused the Shah's suspicion and was retired in March 1961. In January 1962 he left Iran for Europe where he tried to unite the anti-Shah opposition, but his role as founding director of SAVAK made him an implausible champion of freedom and democracy.⁵ In the beginning his major foreign supporter was Egypt, but in 1968 he decided to go to Iraq to be closer to Iran. On his way there he stopped in Beirut, where he was arrested in April for illegal possession of weapons. He was tried and condemned to nine months in prison, during which time the Iranian government requested his extradition, setting off a major debate in Lebanon on the advisability of giving in to pressure from the Iranian government. Most Maronite politicians (Camille Chamoun, Raymond Eddé) and most Shi'i personalities (for example the then speaker of parliament Sabri Hemadeh) favoured extradition, while Arab nationalist politicians (Kamal Jumblatt and Rashid Karamé), the Sunni mufti and the Maronite patriarch opposed it.⁶ In the end the president of Lebanon, Charles Hélou, decided against extradition, whereupon Iran broke off its diplomatic relations in April 1969 and forbade its citizens to visit Lebanon.⁷ Bakhtiar was allowed to leave for Iraq where Iranian agents assassinated him in 1970.

Teimur Bakhtiar had been a former man of the regime. His opposition to the

especially pp. 105–9.

5. *Sipahbud Taymūr Bakhtiyār bah rivāyat-i asnād-i Sāvāk*, vol. 1, *Avvalīn raʾīs-i Sāvāk* (Teheran: Markaz-i barrasī-yi asnād-i tārikhī, 1378/1999–2000), p. 32.
6. In retaliation, the Shah also withdrew his ambassador from the Holy See, because Pope Paul VI had not intervened to stop the patriarch. The Pope sent message that he had no control over the Maronite patriarch, who had helped him get elected. But Vatican diplomacy weathered the crisis. For details see 'Alīnaqī 'Ālīkhānī, ed., *Yāddāshthā-yi 'Ālam*, vol. 1 (n.p.: New World Ltd, 1992), p. 191.
7. *Sipahbud Taymūr Bakhtiyār bah rivāyat-i Sāvāk*, vol. 2 *Bakhtiyār dar Lubnān* (Teheran: Markaz-i barrasī-yi asnād-i tārikhī, 1378/1999–2000), a collection of SAVAK reports from Beirut, contains a wealth of original information about the involvement of Lebanese personalities of all major confessions in the negotiations with the Iranian government. Many reports imply hefty payments by the Iranian governments to its friends in Lebanon.

Shah had not been ideologically motivated and, most importantly, Lebanon had not been his base of operations. His arrest in Beirut had been an accident. Matters were different for those Iranians who flocked to Lebanon after 1963 and who, by and large, did not get involved in Bakhtiar's battle against deportation.

In January 1963 the Shah proclaimed his 'White Revolution' and gaoled most members of the opposition. In June 1963 Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was arrested after a fiery anti-Shah speech in Qom, leading to riots that were suppressed amid some bloodshed.⁸ Most of the constitutionalist opposition to the Shah abandoned the struggle after this show of force, but younger oppositionists decided to continue the struggle by other means. The successes of the Algerian, Cuban and Vietnamese revolutionaries convinced them that the Shah's regime could only be overthrown by military means. Lebanon's weak state and, later, the presence of many PLO military camps on its territory made it an ideal place for Iranians to organize and seek military training. In due course, activists representing all major Iranian political tendencies, namely Mosaddeqist nationalism, Marxism and Islamism, found their way to the Levant. In Lebanon they forged alliances with local forces, which affected not only Lebanon but also Iranian foreign policy towards Lebanon after the Iranian revolution of 1979.

THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT OF IRAN AND MOSTAFA CHAMRAN

The LMI, *Nehzat-e Azadi*, founded in 1961 and in effect disbanded in Iran in 1963, was the first political group to send members to Lebanon.⁹ Islamic modernism heavily influenced the LMI's ideological make-up and many of its activists had belonged to Islamic Student Associations, clubs founded in the mid-1940s to provide a haven for observant Muslims at a time when Iranian universities were perceived to be dominated by leftists, secularists and Baha'is. Impatient with the dry, otherworldly religion of the ulema they sought a dialogue with younger, more dynamic members of the clergy, including Musa Sadr who, as we saw in the Chapter 6, had studied at the University of Teheran but with whom they lost touch after the 1953 coup.¹⁰ When the LMI ceased all open activity in Iran in the wake of the June 1963 events, some of its younger members went abroad and founded its external wing. The leading members of this more radical external wing of the party

8. Homa Katouzian, *Musaddiq and the Struggle for Power in Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1990), pp. 218–39.
9. Most English-language publications call the group 'Freedom Movement', but 'Liberation Movement' is its self-designation in English.
10. Ibrahim Yazdi, 'Naqsh-i Imām Mūsā Šadr dar Lubnān va inqilāb-i Īrān', in Hādī Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Musā Šadr* (=Vizahnāmah No. 5, *Tārīkh va Farhang-i mu'āšir*) (Qom: Markaz-i Barrasīhā-yi Islāmī, 1375/1997), pp. 405–6.

were Ibrahim Yazdi, Mostafa Chamran and Sadeq Qotbzadeh in the USA, Ali Shariati in France and Sadeq Tabataba'i (a nephew of Musa Sadr) in Germany.

In late 1963 Chamran, Qotbzadeh and Yazdi visited Egypt and negotiated with the Egyptian government to base an anti-Shah organization in that country. The new organization was called SAMA^c, the Persian acronym for *Sazeman-e mahsus-e ettehad va 'amal* (Special Organization for Unity and Action), and Chamran was chosen to supervise the military training of its members. Between 1964 and 1966 four groups of militants were trained at the al-Khas garrison 90 kilometres from Cairo, but in 1966 SAMA^c decided to stop cooperating with the Egyptian government because of Nasser's increasingly anti-Iranian Arab nationalism: the Egyptian government (followed by a few other Arab governments) began to refer to the Persian Gulf as the 'Arabian Gulf' and to Iran's southwestern Khuzistan province as 'Arabistan', going so far as to support a secessionist movement there.¹¹ SAMA^c first protested against these measures, which it saw as directed against Iran as a nation rather than against the Shah's regime, and, having failed to convince their friends, decided to move out of Egypt. In 1966 Yazdi established SAMA^c's headquarters in Beirut, while other members went to Baghdad and Basra; Chamran was left in Cairo to wrap up operations there and joined Yazdi in Beirut a few months later. But in the spring of 1967 relations between Iran and Lebanon deteriorated and the resulting pressure of the Lebanese government forced first Chamran and then Yazdi to return to the United States.¹² After 1967 the group in fact disbanded, having concluded that the time was not ripe for armed struggle against the Shah and that therefore the fight against his regime had to take the form of inculcating students with a revolutionary Islamic consciousness, for which purpose Islamic Student Associations were created in the United States and Europe.¹³

From Egypt Yazdi often travelled to Lebanon where he soon established a rapport with Musa Sadr, whom he knew from their student days in Teheran. On one of these trips Musa Sadr told him that he was looking for a director for the technical school he had established in Tyre and Yazdi suggested Mostafa

11. For dispassionate discussions of the contested nomenclature of these areas see C. Edmund Bosworth, 'The Nomenclature in the Persian Gulf', in Alvin J. Cottrell, ed., *The Persian Gulf: A General Survey* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) and Svat Soucek, 'Arabistan or Khuzistan', *Iranian Studies*, 27:2–3 (Spring–Summer 1984).
12. Interview with Ibrahim Yazdi in Sarhang [Colonel] Ghulāmriḏā Nijātī, *Khāfirāt-i Bāzargān: Shast sāl khidmat va muqāvat, vol. 2* (Teheran: Risā, 1377/1998), pp. 170–1, 180–2.
13. For greater detail see H. E. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: The Liberation Movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1990), pp. 186–202.

Chamran.¹⁴ Chamran accepted and moved to Lebanon in 1971.¹⁵ As he put it in his own words:

As soon as I settled in southern Lebanon in 1971 I started classes in Islamic ideology in the style of the Islamic Student Associations. From each village I chose one or two believing and Muslim teachers, totalling about 150. These would visit the school once a week and conduct sessions at which [Musa] Sadr, Shaykh [Muhammad] Mahdi Shamseddin and Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah gave talks as well. There were discussions and criticism and little by little I joined the discussions and gave a series of ideological lessons. About half of these people left, the other remained and became the first core group of the Movement of the Deprived (*Harakat al-Mahrumin*).

In Beirut we did the same, although there the difficulties were greater. ... Thus we trained the best Shi'i youth, and it was these young believers who later became the cadres of the Movement of the Deprived and of Amal.¹⁶

In 1974 Amal, with the help of al-Fateh instructors, began to train Shi'i youth near the Syrian border and Yassir Arafat visited the camp a number of times. According to Chamran, hundreds of Iranians were also trained at this camp, causing the Iranian ambassador, Mansur Qader, to launch a complaint to the Lebanese government.¹⁷

Chamran's attitude to Palestinians was marked by ambiguity. He supported them wholeheartedly in their struggle against Israel, but at the same time witnessed the nefarious effects of their tactics for Shi'i villagers living near the Israeli border: the PLO began to make raids into northern Israel in 1968.¹⁸ Chamran writes that Palestinian fighters had to pass through Shi'i villages to attack Israel and when the Israelis retaliated it was the villagers who were killed.

14. Yazdī, 'Naqsh-i Imām Mūsā Sadr dar Lubnān', pp. 408–9.

15. In addition to his work at the school, Chamran also supervised a carpet weaving workshop where 300 poor Shi'i girls wove carpets that were then sold at benefit sales. But this workshop was closed (as was a nursing school) when Musa Sadr disappeared and donations diminished. *Lubnān: Guzīdah-i az majmū'a-yi sukhārānīhā va dastnīvīshthā-yi sardār-i pur iftikhār-i Islām, Shahīd Duktur Muṣṭafā Chamrān darbārah-yi Lubnān* (Teheran: Bunyād-i Shahīd Chamrān, 1362/1983), p. 70.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

18. For a good overview of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon see Jacques Seguin, *Le Liban-Sud: espace périphérique, espace convoité* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1989), pp. 63–82. For a list of major Israeli operations in southern Lebanon during the 1970s see *ibid.*, pp. 118–19.

Worse, if a Palestinian fighter were killed in action, the PLO would compensate his relatives, but no such payments were made to the surviving relatives of Lebanese victims, for the PLO and Lebanese government each deemed the other responsible for such payments.¹⁹

THE LEFT AND LEBANON

In the 1960s and 1970s two leftist guerrilla movements emerged in Iran. These later became known respectively as the Mojahedin-e Khalq, whose founders were committed Muslims, and the Fada'iyan-e Khalq, a Marxist group.²⁰ Both had connections with Palestinians in Lebanon.

The future Mojahedin-e Khalq were an offshoot of the LMI in the sense that almost all its founders had been members of that party. They planned to make themselves known to the public by a military attack on the regime, so from early on they concentrated their efforts on sending activists abroad to learn guerrilla tactics.²¹ In March 1970 the nascent and still nameless organization established contact with the al-Fateh representative in Qatar, who arranged further meetings in Beirut.²² In the summer of that year a number of members left Iran for Dubai with a view to continuing on to Palestinian camps in Jordan. A few weeks later two members of the group went to Beirut to discuss the training of Iranian militants with al-Fateh officials.²³ As a result of these talks, a first group of activists, including Mas'ud Rajavi (who would become leader of the Mojahedin in 1977), went to training camps in Jordan, but had to leave after 'Black September' when the Jordanian army put a bloody end to the Palestinian military presence in Jordan. The remainder of the original Dubai group was arrested before getting to Lebanon and the Dubai police put them on an aeroplane to Iran. Their extradition was thwarted, however, when their comrades hijacked the aircraft and took it to Baghdad, where Iraqi authorities arrested the militants. When Ayatollah Khomeini refused to intervene with the Iraqi government on their behalf, Abu Nidal, then PLO representative in Baghdad, came to the rescue by arranging for them to be taken to Damascus after 40 days in gaol.²⁴ In late January 1971 they arrived in

19. *Lubnān*, p. 74.

20. Ervand Abrahamian, 'The Guerrilla Movement in Iran, 1963–77', in Haleh Afshar, ed., *Iran: A Revolution in Turmoil* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1985), pp. 149–74. For a history of the Fada'iyan, see Maziar Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause: The Failure of the Left in Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2000), pp. 43–6, 51–70.

21. Muḥsin Nijāthūsaynī, *Bar farāz-i khalīj* (Teheran: Nashr-i Nay, 1379/2000–2001), p. 291.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 64–5.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 90–1.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 166 and 170, supplemented by a personal communication from the author, 6

Beirut with identity cards provided by al-Fateh that pretended they were Palestinians. They spent about a fortnight at Shaykh Zinad camp near Tripoli before being taken to a camp near Tartus in Syria.²⁵ In April al-Fateh evacuated that camp, whereupon the Iranian guerrillas in training went to Beirut. They rented a flat in west Beirut and, having been told that they could expect no training in the immediate future, they began to study on their own subjects like ideology, sabotage operations, forging documents and producing explosives. In the afternoons they would go to the beaches near AUB to relax.²⁶

Having undergone their training, individual Iranians would return to Iran carrying weapons concealed on their bodies and in their luggage. In Lebanon they posed as Palestinians and, having received identity papers from al-Fateh that gave them new names, they enjoyed a certain amount of immunity on account of the 'Cairo Agreement' the Lebanese government had been constrained to sign with the PLO in 1969.²⁷ To account for their faulty Arabic and Persian accents, they pretended they had been brought up in Afghanistan.

One of the activists in Beirut, Mohsen Nejathoseini (born 1944) was arrested at Beirut airport when he tried to leave the country for Iran smuggling weapons. He was convicted and spent a year and a half in a variety of Lebanese prisons until Palestinian lawyers, claiming he was a Palestinian covered by the Cairo Agreement, managed to get him out in May 1973, though not until Kamal Jumblatt had written a personal letter on his behalf to a Druze state prosecutor in Zahlé.²⁸

In the meantime in Iran, beginning in the summer of 1971, SAVAK managed to arrest the vast majority of the organization's activists before it had had a chance to start its struggle, even choose a name or make its existence known to the public.²⁹ This made external activity more critical to the survival of what was left of the organization. In the event, with the rump having chosen the name *Mojahedin-e Khalq*, it was three external activists who published the organization's first official statement on 9 February 1972 in Beirut.³⁰

After his release from prison, Nejathoseini settled in the Sabra refugee camp

December 2003. On Abu Nidal see Patrick Seale, *Abu Nidal: A Gun for Hire* (London: Hutchinson, 1992), especially pp. 71–119.

25. Nijāthusaynī, *Bar farāz-i khalīj*, pp. 175–7.

26. Ibid., pp. 184–6.

27. For the text of the agreement see Rex Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1990), pp. 201–2. For a discussion see pp. 50–6.

28. Nejathoseini's account of prison conditions at the Raml, Hermel and Zahlé gaols are detailed and would provide a useful source for any study of the Lebanese penal system.

29. Nijāthusaynī, *Bar farāz-i khalīj*, pp. 289–321. See Abrahamian, *Radical Islam*, pp. 126–36, for a discussion of the subsequent trials.

30. Nijāthusaynī, *Bar farāz-i khalīj*, p. 278.

and became the main organizer of the Beirut outpost, which was crucial to the Mojahedin's international network. He explains:

The most important task of the external branch was propaganda, establishing contacts with other militant organizations, creating training facilities and procuring the means for armed struggle. The external branch of the [Mojahedin], in addition to Syria and Lebanon, was active in Aden, Baghdad, Paris, London and Tripoli (Libya), and members were constantly travelling between these areas. Lebanon was, because of the relative freedoms it afforded, the most appropriate country for semi-clandestine activity in the Middle East, and so we chose Lebanon to be the centre of our international contacts and communications. Many of our initial contacts with militant and revolutionary organizations in other countries took place in Lebanon. Moreover, our comrades and sympathizers in Iran always came to Lebanon if they wanted to get in touch with the external organization.³¹

One of the main tasks of the Beirut-based militants was acquiring weapons. That was easy:

In the south of Beirut there were brokers for arms deals. To gain access to the busy world of arms dealers, all one had to do was to gain the confidence of a short fat man who sat on a stool in a tea store and played with his worry beads. ... He could deliver any weapons and equipment that were not too bulky at a prearranged place in Beirut. If no deal was possible with this man, there was always the barbershop of Abu 'Asim, and if one ran into a problem there one could go to the grocery store of Abu Maytham.

Sending weapons and equipment to Iran was more difficult, but between 1970 and 1975 Mojahedin militants smuggled a considerable amount into the country.³² Mostafa Chamran was on friendly terms with the group and, while the Mojahedin had no organizational ties with him, they sometimes turned to him for help with practical matters.³³

Nejathoseini left the Mojahedin after the group underwent a leftward 'ideological transformation' in 1975 and settled in Sweden, but the Mojahedin continued

31. Ibid., pp. 338–9.

32. Ibid., pp. 352–3.

33. Ibid., p. 361, and personal communication, 6 December 2003. It is worth noting that in his later writings on Lebanon Chamran does not mention his early cooperation with the Mojahedin, probably because their ways parted in 1975.

to cooperate with al-Fateh. Militants would typically stay a few months and be followed by others when they returned to Iran. In total, about thirty Mojahedin trained at PLO camps,³⁴ including, as we saw, Mas'ud Rajavi, who revived the non-Marxist-Leninist part of the group in 1978. The PLO gave advice on how to conduct secret operations and hijack aeroplanes, and members of the organization travelling to Beirut acted as conduits through which to deliver money collected in Iran to the PLO.³⁵ In the beginning the Mojahedin kept in contact with the LMI members discussed above, but severed relations after 1975 partly because of the 'ideological transformation' and partly because of the Lebanese civil war in which the two sides had different priorities.³⁶ The Mojahedin's ties were all with al-Fateh and the only Lebanese party that was at times approached for help was Kamal Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party.

As early as 1967 two young Iranians, whose group would later join with others to form the Marxist-Leninist Fada'iyan-e Khalq organization, received military instruction at al-Fateh camps in Jordan.³⁷ In the 1970s the Fada'iyan maintained close ties with George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command. Habash even wrote prefaces to a number of theoretical works written by Fada'iyan activists.³⁸ When Abu Abbas split from Jibril's group during the Lebanese civil war, they sympathized with his group because it opposed Syria.³⁹ In all, about 30 Fada'iyan were trained at camps in Jordan (until 1970), Lebanon and Syria.

34. Ervand Abrahamian, *Radical Islam: The Iranian Mojahedin* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1989), p. 127.
35. Lutf Allāh Maythamī, *Az Nihdat-i Āzādī tā Mujāhidīn: Khātirāt-i Lutf Allāh Maythamī* (Teheran: Nashr-i Šamadiyya, n.d.), pp. 364, 372, 375, 379.
36. If Nejathoseini's memoirs can be taken as an indication of the Beirut-based Mojahedin's view, Musa Sadr was somewhat suspect to them on account of his close and friendly ties with Lebanon's Christian establishment and his indifference to the cotton workers' and fishermen's strikes of 1974. Nijāthusaynī, *Bar farāz-i khalīj*, pp. 402–4. On the social movements in the South see Stephan Rosiny, *Islamismus bei den Schiiten im Libanon: Religion im Übergang von Tradition zur Moderne* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1996), pp. 51–3.
37. Ḥamīd Ashraf, *Jam'bandī-yi sih sālah* (Teheran: Nigāh, 1357/1978–79), p. 93. The two were named Mohammad Saffari Ashtiyani and Ali-Akbar Safa'i Farahani. The latter's engagement with the Palestinian resistance was such that on one occasion he led a Palestinian commando inside Israel, behind the 'Green Line'.
38. For the splits that resulted in these organizations see Paul Salem, *Bitter Legacy: Ideology and Politics in the Arab World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), pp. 188–98.
39. On Abu Abbas's career, which included masterminding the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro*, see *The New York Times*, 3 November 2003, p. A7.

Lebanon was a bridgehead for the international activities of the Fada'iyan, but they maintained very few ties with Lebanese groups. The Lebanese Communist party was unacceptable to them as an interlocutor because of its ties to the Iranian Tudeh party and to the Soviets, and other leftist parties seemed too beholden to foreign countries such as Libya, Syria or Iraq. The only Lebanese groups with which ties were established were the Sultat al-Majalis and the Organization of Communist Action in Lebanon,⁴⁰ two small secular and internationalist parties that opposed the Syrian presence in Lebanon.⁴¹

Finally, the Mosaddeqist National Front, which had reconstituted itself in 1961, ceased all activity in Iran after the June 1963 riots. In Europe Mosaddeqists founded the 'National Front in Europe' in 1961 and, in 1963, some of its members who believed in armed struggle established contact with the Algerian government and later with Palestinian groups. In the late 1960s these radical Mosaddeqists decided to move their operations to the Middle East to be closer to Iran. They chose Beirut as their centre of operations and approached the governments of Egypt, Libya, Syria and Iraq for logistical support, such as permission to establish a secret radio transmitter. Half a dozen or so members moved to Beirut permanently, where they established their headquarters near the Lebanese University and the Shatila refugee camp and announced the formation of *Sazemanha-ye Jebhe-ye melli-ye Iran dar khavar-e miyaneh* (Organizations of the National Front of Iran in the Middle East). From 1971 they published a Persian newspaper called *Bakhtar-e Emruz*⁴² and, to publicize their struggle in the Arab world, they brought out an Arabic publication called *Iran al-Thawra*. They also translated works on armed struggle by Latin American revolutionaries (Uruguay's Tupamaros, Chile's MIR and Che Guevara) into Persian. These newspapers and pamphlets were printed in Palestinian printing houses and a few issues were then sent to Europe and the United States where more copies were made. The Mosaddeqists were active among Iranians in Kuwait and Iraq, where they maintained a secret radio station and had sporadic contact with Khomeini and his circle,⁴³ but they had little success with Iranians in Lebanon, who were more likely to cooperate with Chamran and Musa Sadr. These Mosaddeqists shunned Musa Sadr, whom they mistrusted because of his contacts with the Iranian government and his tensions with the Palestinians.

40. *Munazzamāt al-ʿAmal al-Shuyūʿī*, on which see Tareq Y. Ismael, *The Arab Left* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1976), pp. 69 and 178–95.
41. Telephone interview with Hemad Sheybani (*nom de guerre*), a former Fada'i in Lebanon and Syria, 3 November 2003.
42. This had been the name of the newspaper published by Hosein Fatemi, Mosaddeq's foreign minister who was executed after the 1953 coup.
43. Sayyid ʿAlī-Akbar Muḥtashamī, *Khātirāt-i siyāsī* (Teheran: Khānah-yi andīshah-yi javān, 1378/2000), vol. 2, pp. 73 and 146.

In Beirut a majority of the National Front activists secretly formed a Marxist *Goruh-e Ettihad-e Komunisti* (Communist Unity Group). This group made contact with the nascent Fada'iyan and facilitated their external activities, but given their differences on tactics, the two never merged. The communist Mosaddeqists maintained friendly relations with nine different Palestinian groups, principally al-Fateh, and between 15 and 20 of them were trained in guerrilla warfare at Palestinian camps in Syria and Lebanon. One activist, Abu Shahin, took part in the Lebanese civil war when he participated in the defence of Shatila against Kataeb forces.⁴⁴ Their presence in Lebanon ended when the Shah improved his relations with radical Arab states in the aftermath of the 1975 OPEC meeting in Algiers, and the Beirut-based activists returned to Europe.⁴⁵

RADICAL ISLAMISTS AND LEBANON

Given how much sympathy the Palestinian cause elicited among most Muslim Iranians, and the close ties between the Shah and Israel that Khomeini had been denouncing in 1963, Iranian Islamists in Lebanon were torn between supporting Musa Sadr or the Palestinian cause. As we saw above, Chamran brought the LMI closer to the Shi'is, but Khomeini's more radical followers sided with the PLO.⁴⁶

After the Ba'thist coup in 1968, increased anti-Shi'i repression in Iraq led to an exodus of Shi'i ulema from Iraq to Lebanon; a few ulema who preferred to leave Iran, where relations between the Shah's regime and the clergy were deteriorating, joined them. Even Khomeini, who had been living in Najaf since 1965, toyed with the idea of moving to Lebanon: when the Iraqi government expelled a number of Iranians and Iraqis of Iranian origin from the country,⁴⁷ he announced in a sermon in Najaf on 27 November 1971 that he would ask to be allowed to go to Lebanon.⁴⁸ Khomeini did not go, but one of his students, Seyyed Ali-Akbar Mohtashami,⁴⁹ decided to leave Najaf for Beirut in the summer of 1972. Mohtashami would play a

44. Abu Shāhīn, born in Khorasan and a longtime resident of Iraq, returned to Iran after the revolution and was killed in Kurdistan when, allied with the Komala party, he unsuccessfully defended Sanandaj against government forces.

45. Information on the National Front's activities in Beirut is from Ḥasan Māsālī, *Sayr-i tahavvul-i junbish-i chap-i Īrān* (2nd edn, Saarbrücken: n.p., 2002), pp. 124–32, supplemented by two telephone interviews with Hasan Masali, 15 December 2003 and 25 January 2004. Masali was a leading National Front activist in Beirut.

46. The long-standing tensions between the house of Khomeini and the house of Sadr may have played a role here as well.

47. See Faleh A. Jabar, *The Shi'ite Movement of Iraq* (London: Saqi, 2003), pp. 201–8.

48. *Ṣaḥīfa-yi nūr*, vol. 1 (Teheran: Vizārat-i irshād-i islāmī, 1361/1983), p. 181.

49. His official name is Mohtashamipur, but he usually leaves out the 'pur'.

major role in the founding of Hizballah in 1982, so his early experience in Lebanon is worth noting.⁵⁰

Born in 1946 in Teheran, Mohtashami studied as a cleric with Khomeini in Najaf for a few years before moving to Lebanon. After a month of military training at the Burj Hammud camp near Beirut, he moved to the seminary Musa Sadr had established in Tyre to learn about the position of Lebanon's Shi'is. This brought him into contact with Musa Sadr, who had already disappointed him when, on Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim's death in 1970 he had the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council of Lebanon declare Ayatollah Abulqasim Khu'i the new *marja'* rather than Khomeini.⁵¹ Students from various countries, including many African ones, were being educated at the seminary. Life was comfortable and meals were good, but 'due to the many occupations of Mr Sadr', the quality of the education was low. 'There was neither good management nor were there adequate teachers. The seminarians did not study and the Africans ... would swim in the sea in the afternoon, then dress up and go out to enjoy themselves in town. The seminary was more like a sanatorium than a centre of knowledge and learning.'⁵²

In July 1972 Mohtashami witnessed an Israeli attack on Tyre. In the wake of this attack he began to notice that in their speeches and sermons the local clergy increasingly held the Palestinians responsible for the plight of the people of southern Lebanon. This worried him and he feared that an atmosphere might be created in which Palestinians would have to cease their attacks on Israel. Having become disillusioned with Musa Sadr's 'non-revolutionary' politics, he decided to return to Iraq and apprise Khomeini of the situation. When he met Khomeini, he told him that the southern Lebanese ulema's murmurings would gradually turn people against the Palestinians, which would be in the interests of neither Shi'is, Muslims nor Palestinians and would only benefit Israel. Given that the people of southern Lebanon were Shi'is and that the Shah of the Shi'i country of Iran supported Israel, conflict between Shi'is and Palestinians would reflect badly on Shi'ism in world public opinion. Khomeini was saddened and Mohtashami reports him as saying: 'All the catastrophes that have befallen Islam from the beginning are due to these old men. The main problem for Islam and Muslims are not foreign enemies; these would be easy to deal with.'⁵³ A few days later, on 11 October 1972, Khomeini used the onset of Ramadan to issue a declaration in which he called on all Muslims, especially those who lived in areas in which the Palestinians were active, to support the struggle against Israel: 'Today we observe what the

50. His first impressions of Beirut and Lebanon are given in Chapter 1, pp. 30–1.

51. Muhtashamī, *Khāṭirāt-i siyāsī*, vol. 2, p. 95.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 135 and 141.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 143–50.

agents of colonialism have done to the [Palestinian fighters], first in Jordan and then in Lebanon. We observe the propaganda and conspiracies directed at them by the agents of colonialism, all with the aim of separating Muslim groups from the Palestinian fighters and expelling them from strategically important locations.⁵⁴

Back in Najaf, in early 1973 Mohtashami and a few others began to publish a monthly by the name of *15 Khordad* (the day of the 1963 uprising). After 1975, when relations had improved between Iraq and Iran, Mohtashami would secretly travel to Beirut once a month to get an issue printed. Copies would then be sent to Muslim student associations in the United States for distribution among Islamist students.⁵⁵

Another Iranian Islamist who went to Lebanon was Jaleddin Farsi. Originally a high school teacher, follower of Mosaddeq and member of the LMI, he established contact with clerical Islamists in the 1960s and, after being arrested a number of times, decided to leave the country. On 6 August 1970 he left Teheran and, after a few months in Najaf, went to Beirut. There he met Musa Sadr, Sayyid Muhammad Jawad Mughniyya and others and established contact with the al-Fateh organization. Hashemi Rafsanjani was the main fund-raiser for his activities in Iran and another activist, Mohammad Ali Raja'i, conveyed the money to Lebanon. But, by his own admission, his activities were very limited.⁵⁶ In his memoirs Farsi gives an illustration of his progressive estrangement from Sadr and Chamran. According to Farsi, Chamran's predecessor as director of the technical school at Burj al-Shimali was a 'Maronite Freemason', while the school's principal (*nāzim*) was an Iraqi Shi'i of Persian origin by the name of Salih Husayni. Husayni had fled to Lebanon after the Ba'thist takeover in Iraq (1968) and Musa Sadr had asked him to teach classes on Marxism for Shi'i clerics and educationists at the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council in Beirut, presumably to refute it at a time when many Shi'is were attracted to leftist ideologies. At the technical school he gave young Shi'i boys military training with the help of Palestinian fighters from the nearby camp. It so happened that the Lebanese army had set up a watchtower on the grounds of the school, from which heavy guns were pointed at the nearby Palestinian camp. The Palestinians had repeatedly pleaded with Musa Sadr to use his influence with the 'Maronite' army to remove the watchtower, while the army put pressure on him to stop the military training. Husayni had rejected as inappropriate a film on Algeria that the French had planned to screen at the school and, shortly afterwards, was

54. *Ṣaḥīfa-yi nūr*, vol. 1, p. 193.

55. Muḥtashamī, *Khāṭirāt-i siyāsī*, vol. 2, p. 231.

56. Jalāl al-Dīn Fārsī, *Zavāyā-yi tārik* (Teheran: Ḥadīth, 1373/1994), pp. 216 and 242. Raja'i became Iranian prime minister in 1980 and its second president in July 1981, but was killed, together with the prime minister, Mohammad Javad Bahaonar, on 30 August of that year.

sacked from the school to avoid jeopardizing relations with France, which had two *coopérants* teaching French there, whereas the Maronite director was kept.⁵⁷ This happened in early 1971 and it angered Farsi. Then, in the spring of 1972, Farsi was arrested and expelled from Lebanon and Musa Sadr apparently did not lift a finger to help him.⁵⁸ In fact, Farsi reproduces a SAVAK document that shows Musa Sadr a few weeks earlier to have warned the authorities not to grant Farsi an extension of his visa because he was engaged in anti-Iranian activities.⁵⁹ Farsi, who soon returned to Lebanon, became one of Musa Sadr's staunchest enemies and at one point published a tract against him in Persian entitled *Az Shah ta Sham'un* (From the Shah to Chamoun), on the cover of which was a photograph of Musa Sadr and President Franjieh.⁶⁰ He returned to Lebanon in the mid-1970s and went back to Iran around the time of the revolution.

A third Islamist activist who spent time in Lebanon was Mohammad Montazeri (1944–81), a young cleric whose father, Ayatollah Hosein Ali Montazeri, was one of Khomeini's most prominent disciples.⁶¹ The younger Montazeri began his anti-regime activism after the June 1963 events. In March 1966 he was arrested, imprisoned, tortured and then freed in 1968.⁶² In 1971 he left Iran and, until 1975 when he left Najaf in the wake of improved Iranian–Iraqi relations, he lived in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq. Having made contact with the PLO while still in Pakistan, he went to Lebanon for military training at al-Fateh camps, but spent most of his time travelling, both in Europe and the Middle East.⁶³ In the course of his revolutionary peregrinations he became a master in the art of forging passports and provided false identity papers for Iranians in Europe to go to Lebanon and be trained at PLO camps.⁶⁴ Montazeri aimed at more than just overthrowing the Shah: he used his travels to radical Arab states such as Iraq and Libya to make contacts with Muslim liberation movements as far away as the Philippines and Western Sahara, and even dreamt of setting up an Islamist international. He was particularly

57. Fārsī, *Zavāyā-yi tārik*, pp. 251–3.

58. Muḥtashamī, *Khāṭirāt-i siyāsī*, vol. 2, p. 132. According to a different source, Sadr did intervene, but discreetly: Āyat Allāh Duktur Muḥammad Ṣādiqī, 'Jāmi'ī-i 'ilm va siyāsāt', in Khusrawshāhī, ed., *Imām Musā Ṣadr*, p. 336.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 261.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

61. He was appointed Khomeini's deputy in 1985 but dismissed in March 1989 because of his opposition to some of the regime's more egregious human rights violations.

62. Aḥmad Ṣādiqī Ardastānī, *Zindagīnāmah-yi Hujjat al-Islām shahīd Muḥammad Muntazirī* (Qom: Daftar-i Nashr-i Muḥammad, 1361/1982), pp. 32–8.

63. *Farzand-i Islām va Qur'ān*, vol. 1 (Teheran: Vāhid-i farhangī-yi Bunyād-i Shahīd, 1362/1983), pp. 69–79.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

close to Colonel Muammar Qadhdhafi, who supported the PLO and the Lebanese left in general, and did not get along particularly well with Musa Sadr.⁶⁵

IRANIANS AND THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR

Yazdi kept in touch with Chamran and Musa Sadr throughout the 1970s and visited Lebanon regularly. Shi'is suffered tremendously in the first months of the civil war, which broke out in 1975, when the residential areas around Beirut were devastated.⁶⁶ Soon after the start of the hostilities Yazdi visited Beirut at the request of Musa Sadr, who wanted his views on two issues: how to publicize the plight of the Shi'is in the West and how to improve medical care for the victims of the war. Yazdi approached a number of Iranian physicians in America and one of them, Dr Jalil Zarrabi, who had been a member of the LMI and the Muslim Student Associations, agreed to settle in Beirut with his family, calling himself Hasan Vafa to conceal his true identity.⁶⁷

The technical school was the focus of Mostafa Chamran's activities in south Lebanon. Education at the school entailed imparting technical skills and military preparations: 'As soon as students entered the school, they were taught fighting skills and guerrilla warfare. ... Fifteen of the students and teachers of this school were martyred in fighting with Israel and the Kataeb. ... In addition, mercenaries for Iraq attacked the school on many occasions, ... as did leftists and communists.'⁶⁸

As Chamran tells the story, Yassir Arafat was favourably disposed to Amal but the communists who infiltrated the PLO and its member organizations begrudged Musa Sadr his support among the poor and did their best to harm Amal in the field. They did so by deserting their Amal allies at crucial moments, exposing them to enemy fire or provoking the Kataeb to attack Amal positions.⁶⁹ As an example Chamran cites the fall of the Shi'i enclave of Nab'a, which was adjacent to the much less populous Palestinian camp of Tal Za'tar and close to an Armenian area (Burj Hammud) that remained neutral in the beginning. There was not much of an Amal presence in Nab'a when Musa Sadr sent Chamran to organize the resistance there, but Palestinian fighters deliberately shot at rightist forces from within Nab'a to deflect fire from Tal Za'tar. Amal forces were rushed into Nab'a, but they would get no help from the Palestinians. When hungry Shi'is turned to the better-off Palestinians for assistance, they were told to ask Musa Sadr to help them. When the

65. Ibid., p. 190.

66. See André Bourgey, 'La guerre et ses conséquences géographiques au Liban', *Annales de Géographie*, 94 (January–February 1985): 24–5.

67. Yazdi, 'Naqsh-i Imām Mūsā Šadr dar Lubnān', p. 411.

68. *Lubnān*, pp. 65–6.

69. Ibid., p. 121.

fall of Tal Za'tar to the Kataeb, who had promised the Syrians not to attack Nab'a, became imminent, the Palestinians fired on the rightists' positions from within Nab'a so as to provoke its fall, which would then overshadow the subsequent fall of Tal Za'tar. Musa Sadr then negotiated the departure of most of the population, a fact that Chamran leaves out of his account, but a few thousand remained and Amal fighters resisted. According to Chamran the leftists fired at them from the back and then elements of Nayef Hawatmeh's Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine organized an attack on the Armenian enclave, raping Armenian women. This drove the Armenians into the arms of the Kataeb, who entered Nab'a with the help of Armenians. The latter avenged the attack on their women by raping some Shi'i women. A truce the leftists had signed with Bashir Gemayel 24 hours earlier allowed them to leave Tal Za'tar, while all the remaining Amal fighters died during the capture of Nab'a on 6 August 1976.⁷⁰ Chamran's version of the fall of Nab'a, written shortly after it happened, is contradicted by other accounts that allege collusion between Musa Sadr and the Kataeb.⁷¹ Amal had to face the hostility of the left as well as of the pro-Iraqi Arab Liberation Front, which, he wrote, attacked Shi'i institutions on a number of occasions, killing and maiming many.⁷² Libya also consistently backed leftist parties and the pro-Libyan press in Lebanon constantly vituperated against Musa Sadr.⁷³

One man who tried to reconcile Amal and the PLO was Sadeq Qotbzadeh, who would stay with Nabih Berri, the future head of Amal, on his frequent visits to Lebanon.⁷⁴ Qotbzadeh was of course close to Musa Sadr and Chamran, but he also maintained close ties with the PLO; in fact he briefly manned its Paris office after the assassination of the PLO representative in Paris, Mahmud Hamshari, until a replacement was sent.⁷⁵ His efforts came to naught, for Arafat had a low opinion of the LMI's tactics for overthrowing the Shah and worked more closely with Jalaleddin Farsi and the Mojahedin.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, when LMI activists organized a

70. Muṣṭafā Chamrān, *Guzārishī az Lubnān* (Teheran: Qalam, 1363/1985), pp. 11–18.

71. For a discussion of the other versions see Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), pp. 48 and 197.

72. *Lubnān*, p. 118.

73. Ibid., p. 338.

74. Carole Jerome, *The Man in the Mirror* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1987), pp. 81–2 and 264. This book is a political biography of Sadeq Qotbzadeh, written by his longtime Canadian companion.

75. Ibid., pp. 79–80. Hamshari was killed in retaliation for the 1972 massacre of Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games in Munich, which had been masterminded by Abu Nidal.

76. Ibid., pp. 83 and 266.

memorial service for Ali Shariati in the summer of 1977, Yassir Arafat attended and gave a speech. One might mention, *en passant*, that Arafat's close relations with various Iranian opposition groups did not prevent him from periodically approaching the Shah through intermediaries to ask for money.⁷⁷

Meanwhile, in his Iraqi exile Khomeini continued to pay attention to Lebanon. On 22 January 1977 he called on Muslims to mobilize to help victims of the civil war, and authorized his followers (*muqallids*) to spend part of the tithes due to him on relief work.⁷⁸ Later that year Khomeini's older son Mostafa visited Beirut on his way to Mecca and met Farsi who wrote, 'we agreed on Lebanese and Palestinian problems'. Farsi was the only major Iranian oppositionist not to attend Shariati's memorial service in Beirut, implying that by organizing it under the auspices of the LMI and Amal, Yazdi and Qotbzadeh wanted to profit from Shariati's popularity.⁷⁹ Mostafa may have carried an anti-Amal turn of mind back to Najaf, for after he died in the autumn of 1977, Khomeini wrote in response to Arafat's message of condolence that he followed Lebanese affairs closely and that he feared that, just as Iran had turned into an American colony, Lebanon might be dealt a similar fate through the agency of the Iranian embassy. He then asked Arafat to keep the Iranian embassy under close scrutiny so as to foil official Iranian deceptions.⁸⁰ However, a semblance of unity was re-established when in November 1977, a few days after Mostafa Khomeini's funeral, his younger brother Ahmad visited Lebanon. On that occasion, to counter rumours that Shi'is were collaborating with the Israelis, Ahmad Khomeini was taken to the South and shown the extent of Shi'i resistance to Israeli incursions: Amal even produced a promotional photograph of Chamran and Ahmad Khomeini looking menacing and each carrying a machine gun. After his return to Najaf, Ahmad Khomeini apparently managed to dissipate the malaise in his father's relations with Musa Sadr.⁸¹

In 1978 the situation was bleak for Lebanon's Shi'is. They had borne the brunt of the early battles in the civil war; Syria occupied the Bekaa Valley; and the PLO controlled much of south Lebanon. In March Israel launched 'Operation Litani' in retaliation for a Palestinian terror act inside Israel: the south of Lebanon up to the river Litani was occupied, and in the course of this invasion over a thousand civilians were killed and close to 300,000 were made homeless. Amid this crisis Musa Sadr disappeared in August 1978 and left a leadership void.⁸²

77. 'Alīnaqī 'Ālikhānī, ed., *Yāddāshthā-yi 'Alam*, vol. 5 (Bethesda, Md: IBEX, n.d.), p. 137.

78. *Ṣaḥīfa-yi nūr*, vol. 1, pp. 225–6.

79. Fārsī, *Zavāyā-yi tārik*, p. 392.

80. *Ṣaḥīfa-yi nūr*, vol. 1, p. 248.

81. Yazdī, 'Naqsh-i Imām Mūsā Ṣadr dar Lubnān', pp. 417–18.

82. It was Sadeq Qotbzadeh who went to Italy to push for an official Italian inquiry, independently of Amal. See Jerome, *The Man in the Mirror*, pp. 261 and 267.

The year 1978 was also one in which the revolutionary movement in Iran gathered momentum under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. In October the Iraqi government expelled Khomeini. Yassir Arafat reportedly invited him to seek refuge in Lebanon,⁸³ but he moved to a village near Paris where Ibrahim Yazdi became his *de facto* spokesman. Musa Sadr's son Sadreddin went to see Khomeini and asked him to do something about his father's disappearance, and Khomeini promised to pursue the matter.⁸⁴ In an interview with the Lebanese newspaper *al-Safir* on 23 November he was asked whether there was any news of Musa Sadr. Khomeini answered: 'Some action has been taken. I hope it will be useful so that he, for whom I and Lebanon's Shi'is ... have affection, can return home soon and pursue his work.'⁸⁵ Two weeks later, in an interview with *Amal*, the organ of the youth movement of the Harakat al-Mahrumin, he revealed what he meant by 'work': in response to a question asking what he had done about Musa Sadr's disappearance, he said that while still in Najaf he had sent telegrams to Yassir Arafat and the Syrian leadership. He added: 'I hope that he returns soon so that he can continue his struggle against Israel.'⁸⁶ This shows that for Khomeini the struggle against Israel took precedence over efforts to ameliorate the situation for Lebanon's Shi'is.

CONCLUSION

As I have shown in this chapter, a wide spectrum of Iranian oppositional groups used the territory of Lebanon to wage their struggle against the Shah. For these Iranians, their activities were part of a wider struggle of the 'oppressed' against the 'oppressors', with Iranians, Palestinians and Muslim Lebanese being in the former category and the United States, Israel and the Lebanese government embodying the latter. What all Iranian oppositionists had in common was a blithe disregard for the legality of the Lebanese state – an attitude they shared not only with other foreign groups established on Lebanese soil, primarily the Palestinians, but also with many Lebanese who were happy to make common cause with outsiders against their own government. As Ibrahim Yazdi explained:

When we moved our Cairo activities to Lebanon, we knew that we would have problems with the Lebanese. In those days they used to say that 75 per

83. Andreas Rieck, *Die Schiiten und der Kampf um den Libanon: Politische Chronik 1958–1988* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1989), p. 341.

84. *Matn-i kāmīl-i khāṭirāt-i Āyat Allāh Husayn 'Alī Muntazirī* (Spanga: Baran; Vincennes: Khavaran; Essen: Nima [=Ittihad-i nashirīn-i irānī dar Urūpā], 2001), p. 243.

85. *Majmū'a-yi muṣāhibahā-yi Imām Khumaynī*, vol. 1 (n.p., n.p., n.d.), p. 82.

86. For the Persian text see *Ṣaḥīfa-yi nūr*, vol. 4, p. 31.

cent of the Lebanese police work for foreigners, and the remaining 25 per cent do not work for Lebanon either! ... It was obvious that if a group wanted to accomplish anything in Lebanon, this would not be possible without the support of influential individuals. It was Imam Musa Sadr who made it possible for Iranian groups to be present and active in the south of Lebanon. He supported [them] in numerous ways. There were cases where the Lebanese police would arrest someone and take him to the airport to be deported to Iran, but the personal intervention of Musa Sadr would save these people.⁸⁷

Secular Iranian groups by and large stayed out of Lebanese politics and dealt exclusively with Palestinians. In fact, in the parlance of the Iranian left, 'going to Palestine' meant going to PLO camps in Lebanon and Syria. Matters were different in the case of the Islamists who started visiting Lebanon in the early 1970s. These interacted also with Lebanon's Shi'is, and if they were ulema they had a common educational background based on years spent in the *madrasas* of Najaf. Some were drawn to Musa Sadr, most prominently Mostafa Chamran, while others tended to be closer to the Palestinians. Geography may have played a role here: the Palestinian camps at which Iranians received their military training tended not to be in the Jabal 'Amil, and this may have prevented them from developing empathy for the plight of the people in the south of Lebanon who were caught in the war between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Be this as it may, the tensions between Iranians who were close to Musa Sadr and those who were more sympathetic to the Palestinians had a deep impact on Iranian policy towards Lebanon after the establishment of the Islamic Republic, in which men who had spent time in Lebanon would occupy many powerful positions.

87. Yazdī, 'Naqsh-i Imām Mūsā Šadr dar Lubnān', p. 416.

Part III

The Islamic Republic and Hizballah

Iran and Lebanon in the Revolutionary Decade

H. E. Chehabi

No aspect of Iranian–Lebanese relations has exercised the minds of Middle East experts and scholars more than the Islamic Republic’s patronage of Hizballah. The ascendancy of Hizballah on Lebanon’s political scene since the early 1980s, which allowed Shi’is to acquire a measure of power in Lebanon’s complex communal constellation of forces that is more in line with their demographic weight, is arguably the most significant long-term development in recent Lebanese history. It would be a capital mistake, however, to ascribe the new prominence of Lebanon’s Shi’is above all to the mobilizational capacity of Iran’s revolutionary ideology or to financial power generated by Iran’s monetary contributions, important as these may be. Lebanese Shi’is’ dissatisfaction with their position near the bottom of their country’s communal stratification ladder and their subsequent efforts to ameliorate their lot predate Iran’s revolutionary movement by many decades,¹ and Hizballah is but one manifestation of this long-term trend.

Hizballah’s creation, early terrorist activities and later accommodation to Lebanon’s political system have received adequate scholarly attention and it is not my purpose in this chapter to recapitulate what is already well known.² Instead, I

1. See references in Chapter 1, footnote 129.

2. To name books only: Stephan Rosiny, *Islamismus bei den Schiiten im Libanon* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1996); Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb’Allah in Lebanon* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1997); Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizballah: Politics and Religion* (London: Pluto Press, 2002); and Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2004). In Middle Eastern languages see Waḍḍāh Sharāra, *Dawlat Hizb Allāh: Lubnān mujtama‘an islāmiyan* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahār, 1998); Shimon Shapira, *Hizballah ben Iran u-Levanon* (Tel Aviv: Moshe

narrowly focus on the role Lebanon played in Iranian foreign policy and on the ways Iranian actors shaped Lebanon's politics during the 'revolutionary decade' in which Khomeini presided over Iran's destiny.³

LEBANESE SHI'IS AND THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

In the nine years preceding the Iranian revolution Lebanese Shi'is had suffered disproportionately from the Palestinian presence in the South, the civil war and the Israeli incursion of 1978 (Operation Litani). In 1975–76 more than 100,000 Shi'is were driven from their homes in Christian-controlled areas, in 1977 Major Haddad's Israel-backed militia terrorized Shi'i villagers in south Lebanon to punish them for having supported the PLO⁴ and in 1978 the Israeli invasion resulted in the deaths of 2000 and the displacement of 250,000, in their vast majority Shi'is,⁵ not to speak of the material damage to houses and infrastructure.⁶ The uprooted Shi'is moved to Beirut's southern suburbs.

Amal, the Shi'i militia founded in 1975, had initially been aligned with the Lebanese National Movement against the Lebanese Forces in the civil war, but had then withdrawn from it after the Syrian intervention of October 1976, which Musa Sadr welcomed. For two years after the Syrian intervention Sadr and Amal lost much of their momentum and Amal had no monopoly on Shi'is' loyalties:⁷ many Shi'is militated in secular and leftist parties and militias,⁸ including Palestinian groups; others were attracted to religious leaders and associations that had devel-

Dayan Centre, 2000); Mas'ūd Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamāt tā pīrūzī: Tārīkhchah-yi hizb allāh-i Lubnān 1361–1379* (Teheran: Mu'assasa-yi muṭālī'āt va taḥqīqāt-i andīshah sāzān-i Nūr, 1379/2000) and Mas'ūd Asad Allāhī, *Junbish-i hizb allāh-i Lubnān; Gudhashtah va ḥāl* (Teheran: Pazhūhashkadeh-yi muṭālī'āt-i rāhburdī, 1382/2004).

3. I borrow the term from Shireen Hunter, *Iran and the World: Continuity in a Revolutionary Decade* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).
4. For details see Cobban, 'The Growth of Shi'i Power in Lebanon', pp. 142–3 and 145.
5. Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizballah*, p. 10.
6. For details, see Jacques Seguin, *Le Liban-Sud: espace périphérique, espace convoité* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1989), pp. 126–7.
7. Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), pp. 42 and 48; and Asad AbuKhalil, 'Syria and the Shiites: Al-Asad's policy in Lebanon', *Third World Quarterly*, 12:2 (April 1990): 10.
8. Mostafa Chamran claimed in 1977 that 95 per cent of the members of the Communist Party of Lebanon and 350 out of 400 (Nasserite) Murabitun fighters in Beirut were Shi'is. Muṣṭafā Chamrān, *Guzārishī az Lubnān* (Teheran: Qalam, 1363/1985), p. 10. Of course these figures are exaggerated. According to Majed Halawi, in 1975 half the Communist Party's members were Shi'is. *A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community* (Boulder: Westview, 1992), p. 106.

oped in the shadow of Musa Sadr's movement and whose members often came from Iraq, driven out by the Ba'athists who came to power in 1968.⁹

In 1978 Amal's fortunes turned for a number of reasons. The Israeli invasion drove many villagers in south Lebanon into its arms, Musa Sadr's disappearance made it more difficult to criticize his legacy, and the Iranian revolution provided an exemplar for successful struggle against oppression and injustice.¹⁰ Moreover, the LNM began to disintegrate after Kamal Jumblatt's assassination in 1977 and, consequently, many of its Shi'i fighters left and joined Amal.¹¹

In late 1978 Shi'is in Lebanon began to set up committees in mosques and *husayniyyas* in support of the Iranian revolution,¹² and they staged two mass demonstrations in Beirut. In early 1979, despite the pressure they were under, 500 Amal militiamen volunteered to go to Iran and fight for the revolution. The Syrians offered to take them to Teheran in their aeroplanes, but the rapid crumbling of the Shah's regime made this unnecessary.¹³ Given the suffering the community had endured, the victory of the revolutionaries in early 1979 was greeted with joy, especially in the poorer areas. On 1 April the proclamation of the Islamic Republic in Iran was greeted with demonstrations in Beirut and a few other towns.¹⁴

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT AND LEBANON

Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran in February 1979 and named Mehdi Bazargan, the founder of the LMI, prime minister of a provisional government that was to govern Iran until new institutions could be put in place.¹⁵ In the new cabinet,

9. Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizballah*, p. 13. On the Ba'athist expulsions and the politics behind them see Ferhad Ibrahim, *Konfessionalismus und Politik in der arabischen Welt: Die Schiiten im Irak* (Münster: LIT, 1997), pp. 260, 266–7.
10. Norton, *Amal*, pp. 49–58.
11. Seguin, *Le Liban-Sud*, p. 95.
12. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamāt tā pīrūzī*, p. 45.
13. *Lubnān: Guzīdah-ī az majmū'a-yi sukhānrānīhā va dastnivishthā-yi sardār-i pur īftikhār-i Islām, Shahīd Duktur Muṣṭafā Chamrān darbārah-yi Lubnān* (Teheran: Bunyād-i Shahīd Chamrān, 1362/1983), p. 350.
14. Andreas Rieck, *Die Schiiten und der Kampf um den Libanon: Politische Chronik 1958–1988* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1989), p. 335, quoting *al-Nahār* of 2 April 1979.
15. On the provisional government see Shaul Bakhash, *The Reign of the Ayatollahs: Iran and the Islamic Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), pp. 52–70 and H. E. Chehabi, 'The Provisional Government and the Transition from Monarchy to Islamic Republic in Iran', in Yossi Shain and Juan J. Linz, *Between States: Interim Governments and Democratic Transitions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 127–43.

men with personal experience in Lebanon were prominent.¹⁶ Ibrahim Yazdi became deputy prime minister in charge of revolutionary affairs and foreign minister in late April. Musa Sadr's nephew, Sadeq Tabataba'i, became government spokesman in early July. Sadeq Qotbzadeh, who had parted ways with Bazargan and criticized him for being too moderate, was appointed head of the national radio and television network. Finally, Mostafa Chamran returned to Iran on 17 February 1979. He was accompanied by a delegation of 92 Lebanese Muslims, including Musa Sadr's successor Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddin, the former speaker of parliament, Husayn al-Husayni and Nabih Berri. On the day after their arrival, the group paid a courtesy visit to Khomeini to pledge support for the revolution.¹⁷ With his experience in establishing ideologically motivated militias, Chamran took a leading role in the formation of the Revolutionary Guards, the Pasdaran,¹⁸ before being named minister of defence in late September.¹⁹

Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan had received a detailed letter about events in Lebanon from Chamran in 1977,²⁰ and he showed his concern for the plight of the Lebanese on a number of occasions. Thus, he ended his Eid message at the close of the fasting month of Ramadan on 23 August 1979 with a salute to 'our own martyrs and suffering people, as well as the refugees of southern Lebanon'.²¹

The provisional government tried to re-establish a semblance of normalcy in Iran while a new constitution was being prepared, but from the outset leftists and more radical Islamists attacked it for being insufficiently revolutionary. While the moderates in the provisional government were wrestling with Iran's multiple problems, radical Islamists organized the Islamic Republican Party (IRP), which included among its leading members men like Ho. Ali-Akbar Mohtashami, Jaleddin Farsi, and Ho. Mohammad Montazeri, figures who had also spent much time in Lebanon in the 1970s and were, as we saw in Chapter 8, sharply critical of Amal and Chamran. And so Lebanon and the Palestinians on its soil loomed large in the struggle between the government and its radical opponents.

The tension became public knowledge over the issue of relations with Libya. On a visit to Iran, Nabih Berri asked Khomeini to put pressure on Qadhdhafi over

16. For details on their oppositional activities see Chapter 8.

17. Shahid Muṣṭafā Chamrān, *Khudā būd va dīgar hīch nabūd* (Teheran: Vizārat-i farhang va irshād-i islāmī, 1380/2001), p. 213n.

18. Kenneth Katzman, *The Warriors of Islam: Iran's Revolutionary Guard* (Boulder: Westview, 1993), p. 29.

19. Before that date, Bazargan mentions him as deputy prime minister for revolutionary affairs. 'Abd al-'Alī Bāzargān, ed., *Masā'il va mushkilāt-i nakhustīn sāl-i inqilāb* (Teheran: Nihād-i Āzādī, 1362/1983), p. 224.

20. It has been published as *Guzārishī az Lubnān* (Teheran: Qalam, 1363/1985).

21. Bāzargān, ed., *Masā'il*, p. 51.

the issue of Musa Sadr, but Qadhdhafi reaffirmed his innocence.²² The Libyan government had welcomed the downfall of the Shah, but as personal friends of Musa Sadr, Chamran and Yazdi were opposed to establishing cordial relations with Qadhdhafi, all the more since he supported Kurdish and Arab autonomists who were contesting the central government's authority in Iran's western and south-western provinces. Sadeq Tabataba'i, in particular, kept criticizing Libya in his speeches and interviews.²³

Khomeini kept pressing the Libyans for information. On 8 March he told a visiting Libyan delegation that he was worried about Musa Sadr and asked them to tell Colonel Qadhdhafi to look into the matter as soon as they got home. When they requested that Qadhdhafi be allowed to come to Iran, he told them that he was about to go to Qom and that the visit should be postponed,²⁴ so it was the second-in-command of Libya, Major Abdul Salam Jallud, who went to Iran from 24 April to 6 May.²⁵ However, he was not given an official welcome by the government on arrival and was instead taken immediately to Qom in a helicopter by Mohammad Montazeri, Colonel Qadhdhafi's admirer.²⁶ There he met Khomeini, who reiterated his demand that Qadhdhafi look into the disappearance of Musa Sadr, but added that he did not mean to make any accusations.²⁷

The quarrel between Montazeri and the Bazargan government started soon after the former's return to Iran in early 1979. Mohammad Montazeri was a fiery internationalist revolutionary (his braggadocio in fact earned him the sobriquet 'Ringo') who dreamt of forging an alliance between a truly revolutionary government in Iran and radical Islamic liberation movements from around the world; however, the provisional government opposed his request to open offices in Iran.²⁸ Montazeri played a leading role in founding the Revolutionary Guards, but when, at his request, Yassir Arafat sent a number of al-Fateh fighters to Iran to train the Guards' recruits, the provisional government, which had succeeded in having Khomeini name

22. Carole Jerome, *The Man in the Mirror* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1987), p. 268.

23. *Matn-i kāmīl-i khāṭirāt-i Āyat Allāh Husayn 'Alī Muntazirī* (Spanga: Baran; Vincennes: Khavaran; Essen: Nima [=Ittihad-i nashirīn-i īrānī dar Urūpā], 2001), p. 244. See also *Ittilā'āt*, 16 Mīhr 1358/8 October 1979.

24. *Shāḥīfa-yi nūr*, (Teheran: Vizārat-i irshād-i islāmī, 1361/1983), vol. 5, p. 175. Ehsan Naraqī claims in a recent interview that Qadhdhafi actually tried to go to Iran, but that his aeroplane was not allowed into Iranian airspace, forcing him to return. Ihsān Narāqī, *Dar pay-i ān hikāyathā* (Teheran: Hikāyat-i qalam-i nuvīn, 1382/2003), p. 100.

25. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 21 March 1980, p. 30148.

26. *Matn-i kāmīl-i khāṭirāt-i Āyat Allāh Husayn 'Alī Muntazirī*, p. 243.

27. *Shāḥīfa-yi nūr*, vol. 6, p. 72.

28. Āyat Allāh Hāj Shaykh Šādiq Khalkhālī, *Khāṭirāt-i Āyat Allāh Khalkhālī* (Teheran: Nashr-i Sāyah, 1380/2001), pp. 311–13.

Chamran to a key position in the Guards, thwarted the arrangement.²⁹ The tension came to a head in the summer of 1979 when the provisional government tried to prevent Montazeri from travelling to Libya with his friends and followers to take part in the tenth anniversary celebrations of the overthrow of King Idriss. On both occasions he ended up going anyway. At that point he started accusing Bazargan and Yazdi of being Zionist agents and averred that Zionists and Americans had kidnapped Musa Sadr after he left Libya.³⁰ Montazeri created a unit for liberation movements within the Pasdaran with his close friend and the brother of his sister's husband, Ho. S. Mehdi Hashemi.

When the provisional government resigned in the wake of the seizure of the US diplomatic hostages in November 1979, Chamran stayed on as minister of defence. He took a leading role in the struggle against the Kurdish insurgency that spread in 1980,³¹ an insurgency in which he detected the same tactics as in the anti-Amal operations of the Lebanese and Palestinian left, and made himself even more unpopular with leftists. Leftists and radical Islamists joined in a smear campaign against him,³² calling him an agent of Mossad, the CIA and the Intelligence Service.³³ While he was Iranian defence minister Chamran was elected to the 24-member leadership council of Amal in April 1980.³⁴

The seizure of the US embassy in Iran inspired a number of Iranian residents of Lebanon to focus attention on the American embassy in Beirut. About fifty students planned a march on the embassy, while other Iranians staged a sit-in on its grounds. Al-Fateh militiamen rounded up the students and expelled them from Beirut, while Syrian troops evicted the occupiers of the embassy.³⁵

29. Aḥmad Ṣādiqī Ardastānī, *Zindagīnāmāh-yi Hujjat al-Islām shahīd Muḥammad Muntazirī* (Qom: Daftar-i Nashr-i Muḥammad, 1361/1982), p. 59.

30. *Farzand-i Islām va Qurʾān*, vol. 1 (Teheran: Vāhid-i farhangī-yi Bunyād-i Shahīd, 1362/1983), pp. 196–250.

31. For a brief outline of the phases of this insurgency see David Menashri, *Iran: A Decade of War and Revolution* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1990), pp. 138–40, 199–201. For Chamran's role see Nader Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992), pp. 34–7. Chamran's own account can be found in Muṣṭafā Chamrān, *Kurdistān* (Teheran: Daftar-i nashr-i farhang-i islāmī, 1380/2001).

32. Much of the left's campaign against the provisional government and its members was spearheaded by the pro-Moscow Tudeh party. See Mohsen M. Milani, 'Harvest of Shame: Tudeh and the Bazargan Government', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 29:2 (1993): 307–20.

33. Bāzargān, ed., *Masāʾil*, p. 226. Some even 'accused' him of being a Jew.

34. Rieck, *Die Schiiten*, p. 316.

35. R. K. Ramazani, *Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 189.

After Bazargan's resignation no new prime minister was named, but Sadeq Tabataba'i administered the prime minister's office and Sadeq Qotbzadeh became foreign minister; pro-Amal elements thus remained entrenched in government for a while. The tensions between Shi'is and Palestinians in Lebanon continued to have repercussions inside Iran. In November 1979 Mohammad Montazeri launched a 'Revolutionary Organization of the Masses of the Islamic Republic' and went to Lisbon to attend an international meeting in solidarity with Palestine, which Arafat opened and Qadhdhafi financed. On his return to Iran he announced that his new organization would send thousands of young Iranian men and women to south Lebanon to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with Palestinians against Israel, and started training them at a camp near Teheran. When Qotbzadeh prevented their departure some of them occupied the foreign ministry and chanted Palestinian songs.

Mohammad Montazeri's solicitude met with little enthusiasm in Lebanon. The government instructed its embassy in Teheran not to grant any visas to the volunteers. The general secretary of Amal, Husayn al-Husayni, averred that Montazeri was mentally deranged,³⁶ and Muhammad Jawad Mughniyya, a Lebanese scholar who wrote the first religiously argued refutation of Khomeini's theory of clerical government,³⁷ sent a telegram to Ayatollah Shari'atmadari in Qom in which he said that the Iranians would be unable to accomplish anything against an Israel that was armed to the teeth, and asked rhetorically whether Iranians wanted to give the last remaining Shi'is of the Jabal 'Amil the *coup-de-grâce*.³⁸

Only about 40 of the first 1000 volunteers ever made it to Lebanon. In early January 1980 Montazeri illegally entered Beirut and set off a minor crisis there when Lebanon's police chief threatened to resign if the government allowed him to stay.³⁹ In the end President Hafez al-Assad of Syria intervened to send all Iranians home and the episode ended in embarrassment for everybody – Iranian, Lebanese and Syrian.⁴⁰

More embarrassment was to come. On 18 July 1980 Anis Naccache, a Lebanese terrorist who in December 1975 had taken part in an attack on an OPEC meeting in Vienna led by 'Carlos', in the course of which a number of hostages – including the Iranian delegate – had been taken and who now professed to be an

36. Rieck, *Die Schiiten*, pp. 341–2.

37. For details see Chapter 1, pp. 39–40.

38. Mughniyya had this telegram printed in *al-Nahār* on 8 December 1979. At noon that day he was interviewed by the Kataeb's radio station about south Lebanon's Palestinian problem, and apparently the questions agitated him so much that he had a heart attack and died the same evening. Karl-Heinrich Göbel, *Moderne Schiitische Politik und Staatsidee* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1984), pp. 138–9.

39. *Farzand-i Islām va Qurʾān*, vol. 1, pp. 301–43.

40. Ramazani, *Revolutionary Iran*, p. 156.

admirer of the Iranian revolution, tried to kill the last pre-revolutionary prime minister, Beirut-educated Shapur Bakhtiar, in Paris. It appears that some in the Iranian leadership had contracted Naccache and his accomplices (another Lebanese, two Palestinians and an Iranian) to eliminate Bakhtiar after his sponsorship of the Nozheh coup attempt, an amateurish undertaking that had failed miserably a few weeks earlier.⁴¹ In the event, Bakhtiar survived, but a neighbour and policeman were killed and another policeman was gravely injured. Naccache was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. The Iranian authorities denied all involvement, but his release later became a condition for freeing French hostages in Lebanon.⁴²

Lebanon receded into the background in the minds of Iranians in 1980 as they turned their attention on the one hand to the power struggle between the IRP and President Abolhasan Banisadr, who had been elected in January 1980 and who was increasingly allied with the Mojahedin,⁴³ and on the other hand to Saddam Hussein's invasion in September 1980. In June 1981 matters came to a head in the power struggle: Banisadr, having been impeached and then deposed by Khomeini, fled to Paris; and an explosion at the IRP headquarters killed much of the party's leadership, including Mohammad Montazeri who had become a member of parliament in the March 1980 elections.⁴⁴ On 21 June Chamran was killed near the war front under what has since been called 'mysterious circumstances'. After the rout of the last moderates Yazdi concentrated on organizing a loyal opposition;⁴⁵ Tabataba'i left politics to become a businessman; and Qotbzadeh was executed in 1982, following an attempted coup in the course of which he had hoped to have Khomeini killed.⁴⁶ From the summer of 1981 the IRP controlled all levers of power in Iran and in the course of the next few months the regime routed all opposition, including the Mojahedin and Fada'iyan. At the time the defeated moderates associated with the provisional government of Mehdi Bazargan and the presidency

41. On this coup attempt see Mark Gasiorowski, 'The Nuzhah Plot and Iranian Politics', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 34:4 (November 2002): 645–66.
42. Jean-Yves Chaperon and Jean-Noël Tournier, *Enquête sur l'assassinat de Chapour Bakhtiar* (Paris: Edition1, 1992), pp. 66–70.
43. The IRP's candidate was to be Jalaleddin Farsi, but he had to withdraw after it was discovered that his father was Afghan, which disqualified him because, according to the constitution, the president has to be 'of Iranian origin'.
44. His anti-American and pro-Palestinian stance had a posthumous manifestation, for it was someone who had been close to him who leaked news of the Iranian government's secret dealings with the Reagan administration in 1986, setting off the Iran-Contra affair – on which more below.
45. He became secretary-general of the LMI after Bazargan's death in early 1995.
46. Jerome, *The Man in the Mirror*, pp. 270–96.

of Abolhasan Banisadr came to be referred to as 'Liberals' by the hardliners, who now officially called themselves 'Hezbollah'.⁴⁷

By 1981 the most ardently pro-Amal elements in Iran were out of the picture, but relations with the PLO had soured as well because Arafat continued to maintain cordial relations with the Mojahedin and, more importantly, because the PLO refused to reciprocate the Iranian revolutionaries' sympathy and condemn the Iraqi attack on Iran. In fact, it became more pro-Iraqi as the war dragged on.⁴⁸ This set the stage for a radical rethinking of the Iranian government's Lebanon policy. In 1981 Ali-Akbar Mohtashami was named ambassador to Syria, from where he was to play a key part in the founding of Hizballah.

LEBANESE SHI'IS AFTER THE REVOLUTION

When the revolutionaries triumphed, Mostafa Chamran was still in Tyre. In one of his last public talks he related how in the weeks after the revolution's triumph, Amal came under attack by leftists and pro-Iraqi Ba'athist militias who were concerned about the revitalization that the Shi'i organization might undergo as a result of the Iranian revolution.⁴⁹ In 1980 relations between Amal and the PLO deteriorated. In April news of the killing of Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr by the Ba'athist regime in Iraq exacerbated tensions between Amal and pro-Iraqi leftist and Palestinian groups,⁵⁰ resulting in armed skirmishes.⁵¹ In the autumn the Iraqi invasion of Iran and the ensuing Iran/Iraq war led to new clashes between Shi'is and pro-Iraqi militias who, in As'ad AbuKhalil's words, had 'plundered south Lebanon before 1982 and alienated the population'.⁵² Inside the PLO, too, pro-Iranian and pro-Iraqi PLO factions clashed in the first weeks of the Iran/Iraq war in (where else?) Beirut.⁵³

The Iranian revolution also affected Amal internally. Amal was not a tightly

47. See Chapter 1, pp. 35–6, for the history of this term.
48. For the dilemmas facing the PLO see Chris P. Ioannides, 'The PLO and the Islamic Revolution in Iran', in Augustus Richard Norton and Martin H. Greenberg, eds, *The International Relations of the Palestine Liberation Organization* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), pp. 82–8.
49. *Lubnān*, pp. 352–64.
50. On Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, Musa Sadr's first cousin and brother-in-law, see Chibli Mallat, *The Renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Naja, and the Shi'i International* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 7–19 and T. M. Aziz, 'The role of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr in Shi'i political activism in Iraq from 1958–1980', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 25 (1993): 207–22.
51. Details are given in Rieck, *Die Shiiten*, pp. 372–3.
52. AbuKhalil, 'Syria and the Shiites': 11.
53. Ioannides, 'The PLO and the Islamic Revolution in Iran', p. 87.

integrated organization; its membership included people from different parts of Lebanon with different attitudes to the Israelis and the Palestinians, with those from south Lebanon more anti-Palestinian than those from Beirut and the Bekaa. In addition, the movement subsumed a variety of political perspectives and ideological preferences, ranging from secularist to Islamist.⁵⁴ Among the latter, there was one current that would play a key role later on, namely that of former Da'wa party activists. The original Da'wa party had been founded in Iraq around 1958,⁵⁵ but after the Ba'athist coup of 1968 a number of Najaf-educated ulema were expelled from Iraq and settled in Lebanon, Iran and the Gulf countries.⁵⁶ Some of those who were in Lebanon founded a Lebanese Da'wa. Their spiritual leader was Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah (born 1935), a *mujtahid* who had returned from Najaf in 1966 and settled in Nab'aa, dedicating himself to the establishment of an associational network of religious, charitable and educational institutions for poor Shi'i migrants. As long as Musa Sadr was in Lebanon, he overshadowed Da'wa and Fadlallah: they had not agreed with his pragmatic acceptance of the Lebanese order, but neither had they challenged him openly. In fact, Fadlallah admitted in an interview that he never liked or trusted Musa Sadr because he was 'promoted as a star by the Christians'.⁵⁷ In the late 1970s Da'wa decided that its members should join Amal in order to disseminate their more radical and religious ideas within that organization, and in April 1980 the party was officially dissolved, reportedly at the behest of Iranian clerics.⁵⁸

Mohammad Montazeri's 1979 escapade in Lebanon had strengthened the more religious elements in Amal, leading them to issue a declaration advocating a more religious outlook. This rise in religious fervour within Amal was the reason why the attacks on liquor stores and other manifestations of Western 'decadence' that occurred in those days were commonly ascribed to Amal.⁵⁹ But, in April 1980, Nabih Berri's election as the movement's secretary-general signalled a more secular orientation, which accepted the Lebanese state and wished to strengthen it *vis-à-vis* the Palestinian fighters operating on its soil while enhancing the Shi'is' share of power. For Berri, the Iranian revolution was an auspicious event for

54. Augustus Richard Norton, 'Making Enemies in South Lebanon: Harakat Amal, the IDF, and South Lebanon', *Middle East Insight*, 3 (January–February 1984): 14.

55. Faleh A. Jabar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq* (London: Saqi, 2003), pp. 78–109; and Ibrahim, *Konfessionalismus*, pp. 191–5 and *passim*.

56. On the expulsions see Jabar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq*, pp. 201–8.

57. As'ad AbuKhalil, 'Ideology and Practice of Hizballah in Lebanon: Islamization of Leninist Organizational Principles', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27:3 (July 1991): 391.

58. Shapira, 'The Origins of Hizballah': 116–19.

59. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvatāt tā pīrūzī*, p. 45. See also Rabinovich and Zamir, 'Lebanon', *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, 4 (1979–80): 620.

Lebanese Shi'is but not a panacea for their problems. It is likely that Berri's gradual disenchantment with the Islamic regime in Iran was not unrelated to the increasing marginalization of his Iranian friends in the LMI within the same regime, for Amal's ties with the LMI survived the resignation of the provisional government: when the LMI held a congress in 1980 Amal sent a telegram of support of the type usually exchanged between sister parties.⁶⁰ As the influence of pro-Amal men in the Iranian government waned, that of pro-Palestinian figures increased. One result was the establishment of friendly ties with Libya. When Sadeq Khalkhali, Iran's infamous hanging judge, visited Beirut in April 1980, he declared that Zionists had murdered Musa Sadr in Rome, drawing furious reactions from Berri and Shamseddin.⁶¹

In 1981 more religiously oriented Amal members such as Husayn al-Musawi and Sayyid Subhi al-Tufayli began to criticize Berri for being insufficiently Islamic and supportive of Khomeini's vision. Husayn al-Musawi, who became official spokesman and deputy leader of Amal in 1981, issued a declaration at the fourth Amal congress in April 1982 in which he paid homage to Khomeini and stated that Amal fighters were ready to march on Jerusalem under Khomeini's leadership – at a time when Berri was trying to open Amal to members of other religions.⁶² While Berri came under attack from within, Shi'i organizations and individuals outside Amal also challenged his policies, including committees for the support of the Islamic revolution, Muslim student associations and men like Abbas al-Musawi, Hasan Nasrallah and Sayyid Fadlallah,⁶³ all clerics who may have been encouraged in their opposition to a lay leader by the ascendancy of the ulema in Iran.

These challenges did not impede Amal's recovery as a military force after 1978. The result was that in 1981 serious armed clashes broke out between it and the PLO over the control of south Lebanon, clashes that continued in 1982, with the worst occurring in April 1982. They ended only when Israeli troops invaded Lebanon again on 6 June 1982.⁶⁴

IRAN'S RESPONSE TO THE 1982 INVASION

Between 1969 and 1981 Palestinians operating out of Lebanon killed 298 Israelis

60. On the LMI congress see H. E. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: The Liberation Movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1990), p. 290.

61. Shapira, 'The Origins of Hizballah': 119.

62. Rieck, *Die Schiiten*, p. 337.

63. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvatāt tā pīrūzī*, p. 49.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 47. Also 'Lebanon', *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, 6 (1981–82): 706.

in northern Galilee.⁶⁵ Given the Lebanese state's inability to prevent PLO raids, the Israelis decided to end the Palestinian presence in Lebanon once and for all. In spring 1982 plans for a large-scale invasion started being made under the aegis of the then defence minister Ariel Sharon.⁶⁶

The timing of the Israel's 'Operation Peace for Galilee' influenced the Iranian interpretation of its causes, for what purportedly precipitated it was the attempted assassination of Israel's ambassador to London on 3 June. On 22 and 23 May 1982 Iranians had, at the price of heavy losses, recaptured Khorramshahr, which had been Iran's major port until it was destroyed and occupied by Iraqi troops in the first weeks of the Iraq/Iran war.⁶⁷ Public morale was high in Iran and in early June the Pasdaran's Unit for Liberation Movements, which Mehdi Hashemi now headed, hosted a conference of liberation movements from around the world on the occasion of the birthday of the Twelfth Imam,⁶⁸ which had been declared 'World Dispossessed [*Mostaz'afan*] Day'.⁶⁹ News of the attack on Lebanon reached Teheran while the conference was in session. Lebanese delegates included Shaykh Shamseddin, Sayyid Fadlallah, Raghīb Harb and Subhi al-Tufayli,⁷⁰ and they asked for Iranian help. The governments of Syria and Lebanon also asked the world for help and the Iranian government responded. A high-level delegation, including the Iranian defence minister, the commander of the Pasdaran and the commander of the army's ground forces, was sent to Syria to look into how Iran could help.⁷¹ Until then Hafez al-Assad had not accepted Iranian offers to station troops in Lebanon,⁷² but in the meantime relations had become closer. In March 1982 the two countries had signed a far-reaching trade agreement providing for, among

65. Seguin, *Le Liban-Sud*, p. 115.

66. For details see Itamar Rabinovich, *The War for Lebanon, 1970-1985* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 121-35.

67. For details see Dilip Hiro, *The Longest War: The Iran-Iraq Military Conflict* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 59-60.

68. Hāshimī Rafsanjānī, *Pas az buhrān: kārnāmah va khātirāt-i 1361*, Fāṭima Hāshimī, ed. (Teheran: Daftar-i nashr-i ma'ārif-i inqilāb, 1380/2001), p. 132.

69. Celebrated on the fifteenth day of the lunar month of Sha'ban, it fell on 8 June in 1982. Its designation as 'World Dispossessed Day' bespeaks the messianic expectations attending the Twelfth Imam, who, according to Twelver beliefs, will rid the world of injustice and commence his mission in Jerusalem.

70. Jaber, *Hezbollah*, p. 47.

71. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī*, pp. 60-1; Ḥusayn Bihzād and Gul-'Alī Bābā'ī, *Ḥamāsa-yi 27. Kitāb-i yikum: Hampā-yi Sā'iqā: Kārnāmah-yi tārikhī va nizāmī-yi lashkar-i 27 mikānizah-yi Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh, Day 1360-Tīr 1361* (Teheran: Sāzimān-i tablīghāt-i islāmī, 1379/2000), p. 758. I thank Kaveh Bayat for giving me this book.

72. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī*, p. 62.

other things, shipments of cheap Iranian oil to Syria. A few weeks later Syria closed a pipeline carrying oil from Kirkuk to Tripoli, thus inflicting heavy losses on Iraq.⁷³ Iran and Syria were thus 'objectively' allies, so on this occasion Syria could not deny Iranians permission to send troops to Lebanon to help fight the Israelis. The Iranian delegation met President Hafez al-Assad and signed an agreement providing for the sending of Iranian troops to Lebanon.

They were among the most experienced the Islamic Republic had to offer. Members of the 27th brigade, named after the Prophet Muhammad himself, they had distinguished themselves in the reconquest of Khorramshahr two weeks earlier. In a private audience Khomeini received the commanding officer of the brigade, Ahmad Motevasselian, on home leave in Teheran, and told him that the Iranian victory notwithstanding, the war against Saddam Hussein would go on and that the members of the brigade should be prepared.⁷⁴ In late May, when Iraqi troops were under pressure, Saddam Hussein had offered a cease-fire, which Khomeini refused. When Israel attacked Lebanon, he reiterated his offer, urging Iran to combine its forces with the Arabs to fight Israel in Lebanon. But Khomeini again refused. In fact, on 7 June he issued a statement in which he equated the Iraqi war against Iran with the Israeli attack on Lebanon and reserved his harshest criticism for those Muslim states that maintained friendly relations with the United States and its 'two illegitimate offspring', Israel and Saddam Hussein.⁷⁵ For Khomeini, the Israeli attack on Lebanon was an American conspiracy to divert Iran's attention from Iraq to Lebanon at a time when it seemed to be winning the war. There may indeed have been a link between the two wars, for the British inquiry into the assassination attempt on the Israeli ambassador showed that its instigator had been Abu Nidal, who had been working closely with the Iraqi government at the time. This led some to speculate that Saddam Hussein ordered the murder to provide Israel with the *casus belli* its hardliners sought in order to ignite a war that would make Khomeini accept a cease-fire with Iraq.⁷⁶ Others have speculated that Saddam wanted to create trouble for Syria by unleashing Israeli might against it, so as to punish it for its alliance with Iran.⁷⁷ Patrick Seale, for his

73. Hussein J. Agha and Ahmad S. Khalidi, *Syria and Iran: Rivalry and Cooperation* (London: Pinter, 1995), p. 13.

74. Bihzād and Bābā'ī, *Ḥamāsa-yi 27*, pp. 746-8. A hagiography of Motevasselian is also available: Ḥusayn Bihzād, *Dar intihā-yi ufuq: Zindagīnāmah-yi Sarlashgar-i pāsdār-i javīd al-athar Hāj Ahmad Mutivassiliān* (Teheran: Bunyād-i shahīd-i inqilāb-i islāmī, 1376/1997).

75. *Shāhīfa-yi nūr*, vol. 16, pp. 186-7.

76. Kenneth R. Timmerman, *The Death Lobby: How the West Armed Iraq* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991), pp. 236-7.

77. Agha and Khalidi, *Syria and Iran*, p. 14.

part, argues that at the time of the assassination attempt Abu Nidal's relations with the Iraqi regime had already soured and that he may have been manipulated by Israeli intelligence into providing the *casus belli* that Israeli hardliners wanted.⁷⁸

Be this as it may,⁷⁹ the Iranians decided to send a battalion of the 27th brigade to Lebanon: its members resided in Teheran and were therefore politically more sophisticated; some of the commanders had fought against the Kurdish insurgency and were thus experienced in guerrilla tactics, and they had excelled at traditional warfare against Iraq.⁸⁰ Iran's High Defence Council, chaired by then President Ali Khameneh'i, convoked Motevasselian and informed him that a battalion from his brigade and one from the regular army's elite 58th ranger division would be combined and sent to Lebanon under the name 'Forces of Muhammad the Prophet of God' (*Qova-ye Mohammad Rasul Allah*).⁸¹

Only six days after the Israeli attack the first group of Iranian soldiers arrived in Damascus on the evening of 11 June 1982. Syrian officials and the Iranian ambassador, Ali-Akbar Mohtashami, greeted them at the airport. From the airport the Iranians went straight to Zaynabiyya to visit the shrine of the Prophet's granddaughter, and from there they went to the quarters that had been assigned to them. Wherever they went, ordinary people, some of whom even tried to shout slogans in Persian, enthusiastically received them.⁸² The rest of the soldiers followed later, carrying equipment captured from the Iraqis. The populace enthusiastically received them too.⁸³

Syrian officialdom was, however, more reserved. To their consternation, the quarters to which the Iranians were assigned at Zebdani, on the Lebanese border, reminded them more of a shantytown than of barracks, and no provisions were made for meals and hygiene. Motevasselian formed teams to reconnoitre the Bekaa Valley and the Iranian commanders held meetings with Syrian officials to decide

78. Patrick Seale, *Abu Nidal: A Gun for Hire* (London: Hutchinson, 1992), pp. 222–8.

79. For further speculations on the connection between Israel's attack and the Iranian revolution, see Ramazani, *Revolutionary Iran*, pp. 178–81.

80. From an interview with the then commander of the Revolutionary Guards, quoted in Bihzād and Bābā'i, *Hamāsa-yi* 27, pp. 758–9.

81. Ibid., p. 759.

82. From a reporter's account in *Umūd-i inqilāb*, no. 36 (Tīr 1361/June–July 1982), as quoted in Bihzād and Bābā'i, *Hamāsa-yi* 27, pp. 763–5. Motevasselian later claimed in an interview that the warm welcome extended to the Iranians by both officials and ordinary people was due to the fact that while other members of the 'Rejection Front' (Libya, Algeria, South Yemen) had done nothing to help, Iran had responded to Syrian pleas while it was itself fighting a difficult war. *Payām-i inqilāb*, no. 62 (19 Tīr 1362/10 July 1982). In fact, the Iranian contingent seems to have included a few volunteers from Libya and Algeria. Bihzād and Bābā'i, *Hamāsa-yi* 27, p. 763.

83. Bihzād and Bābā'i, *Hamāsa-yi* 27, pp. 765–7.

how the Iranian troops could best be used against Israel, but nothing came of the meetings. After a few days the Iranians at Zebdani received a visit from Rifaat al-Assad, the president's younger brother, who played a leading role in shaping and executing Syria's Lebanon policy.⁸⁴ Speaking to the visiting troops, he acted with 'cold courtesy' and repeatedly drew attention to the cease-fire that the Israelis had proclaimed on 11 June – the very day the first Iranians had arrived in Damascus.⁸⁵ At this point the Iranians began to understand that the Syrian government did not mean business and wanted to keep them there for propaganda purposes only. The troops were getting restless, for they would rather fight against Saddam Hussein than sit idle in Zebdani. On 24 June Motevasselian went to Iran to seek orders about what to do.⁸⁶ Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the speaker of parliament who was emerging as the regime's pivotal figure, and Ahmad Khomeini, the Imam's son, agreed that Israel's victory was complete, that Palestinians were retreating and that Iran's assistance would accomplish nothing.⁸⁷ When Iran's top military officials met Khomeini on 25 June, he told them that Israel's attack in Lebanon had been a plot to divert Iran's attention from the war with Iraq and, stating that the road to Jerusalem passed through Karbala, ordered the troops to leave Syria immediately.⁸⁸ Motevasselian went back to Damascus to make the necessary arrangements and most of the Iranians returned to Iran. While he was there news arrived that Israelis and Kataeb fighters were surrounding the Iranian embassy in Beirut, and he offered to go to Beirut under diplomatic cover to destroy sensitive documents in the embassy. Together with the Iranian chargé d'affaires in Beirut, a driver and a photographer of the official Iranian news agency, they left Damascus for Beirut on 4 July. Lebanese Forces kidnapped them on the way and they were never seen again.⁸⁹ On 10 July most of the remaining revolutionary guards and soldiers returned to Iran and joined the fight against Saddam Hussein.⁹⁰

84. Rabinovich, *War for Lebanon*, pp. 66–7.

85. For details, see *ibid.*, pp. 137–8.

86. The above account is from Bihzād and Bābā'i, *Hamāsa-yi* 27, pp. 769–76.

87. Rafsanjānī, *Pas az buhrān*, p. 159.

88. Bihzād and Bābā'i, *Hamāsa-yi* 27, p. 778; and Ahmad Dihqān, ed., *Nāguftahā-yi jang: khātirāt-i sipahbud-i shahīd 'Alī Sayyād Shīrāzī* (Teheran: Sāzimān-i tablīghāt-i islāmī, ḥawza-yi hunarī, 1378/1999), pp. 316. Khomeini's statement can be found in *Ṣaḥīfa-yi nūr*, vol. 16, pp. 212–13.

89. In 1990 Samir Geagea, the head of the militia at the time, told relatives of the four that they had been killed shortly after their capture at the order of the group's intelligence chief, Elie Hobeika. AFP, 2 April 1997. Consulted at www.farsinet.com/news/apr97b.html

90. Bihzād and Bābā'i, *Hamāsa-yi* 27, pp. 778–87. Perhaps it is a sign of the messianic fervour of those years that Motevasselian told close friends that the Twelfth Imam himself had appeared to him twice in the guise of a revolutionary guard to tell him that he would die fighting Israel in Lebanon. Ibid., pp. 780, 781.

Hafez al-Assad's reluctance to allow Iranian Pasdaran to fight against the Israelis was motivated by the desire not to let Iran become too influential in Lebanese affairs and thus challenge Syria's hold on that country. In addition, a powerful Iranian presence might also weaken Amal, which had become a close ally of the Syrians since the Syrian intervention in the civil war.⁹¹ With Khomeini's decision that Iran had priority over Lebanon, the participation of Iranian troops in the war against Israel became moot. After most Pasdaran returned home, a few hundred, assisted by clerics from the Pasdaran's 'Cultural Unit' (a total of about 1500), were sent to the Bekaa Valley to train Lebanese. Ali-Akbar Mohtashami, who oversaw their activities from his embassy in Damascus, knew the area. In 1970 he had lived in the village of Yammoune and had been favourably impressed by its people: 'Their men are courageous and mostly armed, and derive most of their income from planting cannabis. They do not submit to government authority and do not pay for water and electricity. They have fought several times with neighbouring Christian villages and have won. They like the [Shi'i] clergy.'⁹²

FROM THE ISRAELI INVASION TO HIZBALLAH

When Israel invaded Lebanon with a large part of its military forces, the Palestinians retreated and Amal did not mount much resistance. A small band of Shi'is, who told reporters they were followers of Ayatollah Khomeini, made a stand at the southern approaches of Beirut and, supported by leftists, managed to capture a few Israeli tanks and personnel carriers. The mostly Shi'i southern suburbs of Beirut became a staging post for their activities. After President Ronald Reagan appointed Philip Habib to mediate in the war, the president of Lebanon, Elias Sarkis, appointed a five-member Committee of National Salvation representing all the major communities, to negotiate with Habib and the Israelis, and Nabih Berri agreed to be the Shi'is' voice on it. However, Musa Fakhri Rowhani, the Iranian ambassador in Lebanon, asked Berri to resign because he considered it to be an 'American committee'; and the Amal representative in Iran, Sayyid Ibrahim al-Amin, supported that view at a press conference in Teheran.⁹³ When Berri refused, Husayn al-Musawi, the deputy secretary-general and a number of other Islamists issued a statement condemning his compromising attitude and accusing him of betraying the heritage of Musa Sadr.

91. AbuKhalil, 'Syria and the Shiites': 9-13.

92. Sayyid 'Alī-Akbar Muhtashamī, *Khātirāt-i siyāsī* vol. 2 (Teheran: Khānah-yi andīshah-yi javān, 1378/2000), p. 108. Musa Sadr had tried to mediate between the state and the impoverished inhabitants of the Bekaa hinterland to find alternatives to the lucrative hashish traffic, but the civil war cut his efforts short. See Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied*, p. 151.

93. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī*, p. 58.

Habib's effort resulted in a peace plan in which PLO fighters would leave Lebanon by early September. Berri's acquiescence to this plan immediately came under attack from many sides. A few Amal leaders opposed it and defiantly started fighting the Israelis. The dispute between Berri and the Islamists was submitted for arbitration to Mohtashami in Damascus, who ruled in favour of al-Musawi. But Berri refused to abide by the decision and Husayn al-Musawi went to his native Bekaa where he announced the founding of an organization called 'Islamic Amal',⁹⁴ explaining that Amal had deviated from the Islamic revolution and that it was the Iranian leadership that defined what was and what was not Islamic.⁹⁵ For good measure Sayyid Ibrahim al-Amin held a press conference in Teheran, announced his resignation from Amal and called on all 'brothers' to do likewise. In July al-Musawi was officially expelled from the organization.⁹⁶ There now was a serious rival to Amal and in mid-August a delegation of Shi'i ulema from Lebanon visited Iran, made suggestions about what kind of aid Iran could supply and indicated that they did not want to work with Amal.⁹⁷

While Mohtashami's ruling may have been the effective cause of the split, it should not be forgotten that Berri's decision was deeply unpopular with many Shi'is. Those in the Bekaa did not share the Southerners' exasperation with the Palestinians, and those in Beirut genuinely detested the Lebanese Forces for having evicted them from their neighbourhoods and thus could not brook Berri's joining a committee that included Bashir Gemayel, the main leader of the Lebanese Forces.⁹⁸

With Israel occupying south Lebanon, militant Shi'is opposed to Berri had only the Bekaa to go to. So the defenders of the southern suburbs, members of student associations, mosque groups, small militia units that had operated under the auspices of Amal, members of the committees in support of the Islamic revolution, and men who had militated in Palestinian organizations congregated in the Bekaa. These groups had so far acted mostly in isolation from each other, but now they came together and the Pasdaran instructed them in guerrilla fighting and revolutionary Shi'ism of the Iranian variety. The first group of trainees comprised 180 men, including S. Abbas al-Musawi (1952-92), who was to become the second secretary-general of Hizballah in 1991. Teams were also dispatched to the South to link up with spontaneous resistance groups, but the Iranians did not take part in any actual fighting.⁹⁹

94. Ibid., pp. 55-9.

95. Sharāra, *Dawlat Hizb Allāh*, p. 127.

96. Rieck, *Die Shiiten*, p. 415.

97. Rafsanjānī, *Pas az buhrān*, p. 222. 19 August 1961.

98. AbuKhalil, 'Syria and the Shiites': 14.

99. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī*, pp. 59-65. A number of Pasdaran died,

According to one Lebanese source, the Iranians' conduct in the Bekaa was very different from the predatory behaviour of other militias, gaining them a certain measure of popularity among the Shi'i populace. They made themselves useful in the villages on weekends, and transmitted their revolutionary Islamic message not only in words but also in deeds, so much so that for a while villagers would go and seek *baraka* (blessings) from them.¹⁰⁰ The Iranian presence in Baalbek, Hermel and other towns and villages of the Bekaa brought about a cultural revolution. Women chose, were coerced or found it prudent to veil themselves, and the very un-Lebanese Iraqi black *abaya* became a common sight. Bars stopped serving alcoholic beverages and a new radio station, 'Voice of the Iranian Revolution', began broadcasting eight hours of sermons, religious programmes and news. Pictures of Khomeini and exhortations to seek martyrdom began covering walls.¹⁰¹

In Baalbek the Iranians facilitated a coming together of various Lebanese Shi'i militants, including former Da'wa activists within Amal, Islamic Amal, student associations and other groupings.¹⁰² The different groups' delegates formed a nine-man committee to lay the basis of a new organization dedicated to the novel Iranian conception of theocratic rule (*wilayat al-faqih*) and the struggle against Israel. This committee sent a delegation headed by Abbas al-Musawi to Teheran where Khomeini told them that action was what mattered. On 11 October 1982 al-Musawi asked the Iranian leadership to appoint an arbiter for disagreements in Lebanon so that all decisions taken would be based on the shari'a.¹⁰³ On 12 October Iran's High Defence Council met and approved plans for a 'Council of Lebanon'. Khomeini then sent a personal representative to Lebanon.¹⁰⁴ On their return to Lebanon, five members of the committee formed this 'Council of Lebanon', which held its first meeting in early 1983.¹⁰⁵ This council, operating in secret and practising collective leadership, gradually created the organizational structures of Hizballah and gave it an ideological identity. Most of the leading figures came from the Bekaa Valley, where Shi'is had traditionally been less involved in politics than in Jabal 'Amil. Many Shi'is who had militated in Palestinian organizations and

however, when the Israelis bombed their bases in November 1983. Ramazani, *Revolutionary Iran*, p. 184.

100. Hasan Faḍl Allāh, *al-Khiyār al-ākhir* (Beirut: Dār al-Hādī, 1994), p. 15. I thank Lobna Reda for translating this passage for me.

101. Robin Wright, *Sacred Rage* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986), pp. 81–3 and Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon* (New York: Atheneum, 1990), pp. 468–9.

102. Shapira, 'The Origins of Hizballah': 124–9.

103. Rafsanjānī, *Pas az buhrān*, p. 274.

104. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī*, p. 68.

105. Jaber, *Hezbollah*, p. 48; and Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī*, p. 68.

who had no home after the expulsion of the PLO also joined. Amal gave them a cold shoulder on account of past friction with Palestinian groups, but the Iranians, many of whom (including Mohtashami) had trained in Palestinian camps, and the Lebanese militants in the Bekaa welcomed them. Given their superior experience, these people soon occupied leading positions in the military and intelligence operations of the new movement, most notoriously Imad Mughniyya, who had worked for al-Fateh intelligence and been a member of the PLO's elite Force 17.¹⁰⁶

Cooperation between the various strands within what later became Hizballah was not, apparently, without tension and different constituent groups of the Hizballah coalition seemed to have had special relations with different actors within the Iranian regime. Former Da'wa activists were close to the Pasdaran. Reportedly, the first contingent of Pasdaran to be sent to the Bekaa was led by Mohsen Rafiqdust, a man who had received military training in Palestinian camps in the 1970s and by early 1979 was so close to the clerical leadership that he drove the car that carried Khomeini from Mehrabad airport to Teheran when the imam returned home. As early as 28 June 1982 he had reported to Rafsanjani that 'possibilities in Syria were stagnant',¹⁰⁷ which may have led him to try to circumvent the Syrian government, with which Mohtashami, as Iranian ambassador, had friendly relations. In November 1982 he joined the cabinet as minister for Revolutionary Guards, but kept a close eye on his men in the Bekaa as long as they were there.¹⁰⁸ In his diaries Rafsanjani refers to the tensions, but as of this writing only the diaries for the years 1361 and 1362 AHS (March 1982–March 1984) have been published. Thus we learn that on 3 July Mohtashami and S. Abbas al-Musawi saw Rafsanjani and complained that the Pasdaran favoured the Da'wa (al-Tufayli and Kurani).¹⁰⁹ On 10 September 1983 the top Iranian leadership held a meeting at the president's office to discuss Mohtashami's conflict with the Da'wa. Pasdaran officials were summoned and told that their support for Da'wa was encouraging them not to heed the Council of Lebanon. The next day, Subhi al-Tufayli saw Rafsanjani and called for more radical action in Lebanon, complaining that, under Syrian influence, Mohtashami had become too cautious. He was told to cooperate.¹¹⁰ In Iran, the top decision-makers regularly met to review reports on Lebanon submitted by the Pasdaran and to discuss the situation in that country.¹¹¹ The Iranian regime supported the militants in the Bekaa wholeheartedly. Amal was now being ostrac-

106. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī*, pp. 67–70; Jaber, *Hezbollah*, p. 115.

107. Rafsanjānī, *Pas az buhrān*, p. 164.

108. Katzman, *The Warriors of Islam*, pp. 71 and 96–7.

109. Akbar Hāshimī Rafsanjānī, *Ārāmish va chālīsh: Kārnāmah va khātirāt-i sāl-i 1362*, Mahdī Hāshimī, ed. (Teheran: Daftar-i nashr-i ma'ārif-i islāmī, 1381/2002), p. 218.

110. Ibid., pp. 266–7.

111. Ibid., p. 380.

cized,¹¹² but Shaykh Shamseddin, Musa Sadr's successor as head of the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council and Nabih Berri's main rival for leadership of moderate Shi'is, went to Iran regularly, much to the anger of Hizballah,¹¹³ as did Sayyid Fadlallah, Shamseddin's main rival for clerical leadership in Lebanon and the spiritual mentor of Hizballah.¹¹⁴

In Lebanon various groups militated under the umbrella of what gradually became known as Hizballah, until a more unified organization was formed in May 1984.¹¹⁵ In February 1985 Hizballah made its existence public with an open letter in which it pledged to fight for Israel's 'departure from Lebanon as a prelude to its final obliteration', called for an Islamic state while pledging not to impose it by force, and urged all Muslims to emulate the Islamic revolution of Iran.¹¹⁶ A portrait of Khomeini appeared on the back of the letter presented by Hizballah's official spokesman Ibrahim al-Amin, former Amal representative in Iran.

HIZBALLAH IN ACTION

The activities of Hizballah, both as a loose amalgam of militant groups and as an organized movement, are well known and will not be reiterated here in detail. In late 1982 Hizballah established a presence in Beirut's southern suburbs and south Lebanon, where its Pasdaran-trained fighters joined members of Amal and of Palestinian groups engaged in uncoordinated activities against the Israelis. The various groups formed the 'Lebanese National Resistance' and, as the latter's activities spread, pictures of Khomeini began to appear in some southern villages. By a number of ill-advised policies, the Israelis made themselves ever more unpopular in the areas they occupied, which gained those who fought them increasing sympathy.¹¹⁷

Events in Beirut helped to radicalize the Shi'is. In August 1982 the United States, France and Italy sent troops to Lebanon as 'multinational forces' to oversee the evacuation of the PLO from Beirut and to safeguard the remaining civilians. After the departure of 12,000 Palestinian fighters, the multinational force left for the time being, but when President Bashir Gemayel was assassinated a few days after his election, Israeli troops entered west Beirut and Lebanese Forces perpe-

112. One who thought this a bad idea and complained to Rafsanjani was Mostafa Chamran's brother Mehdi. Rafsanjānī, *Pas az buhrān*, p. 298. The date is 2 November 1982.

113. Norton, 'Lebanon: The Internal Conflict and the Iranian Connection', p. 128.

114. Rafsanjānī, *Pas az buhrān*, pp. 103, 134.

115. Jaber, *Hezbollah*, p. 51.

116. For the text see Norton, *Amal*, pp. 167–87.

117. For details see Jaber, *Hezbollah*, pp. 14–29.

trated massacres at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.¹¹⁸ Among the roughly 1000 victims were many poor Shi'is who had sought refuge in the camps. At the Lebanese government's request, the multinational forces returned to Beirut, but they soon intervened in the civil war on the side of President Amin Gemayel, whose Kataeb-dominated administration was supported by Israel, and systematically alienated the Muslims of west Beirut by trying to drive out the Shi'i refugees from the southern suburbs. The Islamists saw the Lebanese government, Israel and the multinational forces as part of the same hostile constellation, thus making the latter occupiers rather than peacekeepers, and therefore legitimate targets.

In April 1983 a suicide bomber hit the American embassy. On 17 May Gemayel signed a peace agreement with Israel and, when a number of Islamist ulema organized a sit-in at the Imam al-Rida mosque in southern Beirut to protest against it, the Lebanese army killed one man. The Lebanese government held the Iranian government responsible for the demonstration and threatened to break relations, but demonstrators prevented the departure of the Iranian chargé d'affaires.¹¹⁹ On 17 October 1983 Israeli troops interrupted an *Ashura* ceremony in Nabatiyya, killing one mourner. Tensions rose and only six days later two suicide bombers hit the barracks where American and French troops were stationed, killing more than 300 people. It is uncertain whether the Iranian government ordered these attacks, but it did nothing to stop them. Moreover, as far as the Iranian leadership was concerned, the USA and France deserved to be punished for supporting Saddam Hussein,¹²⁰ and their elimination from the political scene would facilitate the establishment of an Islamic order in Lebanon. On 23 November 1983, after many cases of active Pasdaran assistance in Hizballah attacks on the Lebanese state's remaining presence in the Bekaa Valley, most importantly the Shaykh Abdallah barracks in Baalbek, the Lebanese government broke diplomatic relations with Iran.¹²¹ The Shaykh Abdallah barracks became the headquarters of the Pasdaran. Probably in retaliation for the earlier attacks on Western targets, Mohtashami received a letter bomb in Damascus, which left him partially non-digitate. Fadlallah narrowly escaped a

118. On these massacres, which led to Israeli defence minister Ariel Sharon's resignation, see Amnon Kapeliouk, *Sabra et Chatila: Enquête sur un massacre* (Paris: Seuil, 1982).

119. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī*, p. 82.

120. Throughout the Iran/Iraq war, French policy favoured Iraq. For details see Mohammad-Reza Djalili, *Diplomatie islamique: stratégie internationale du Khomeynisme* (Paris: PUF, 1989), pp. 138–49.

121. Nassif Hitti, 'Lebanon in Iran's Foreign Policy: Opportunities and Constraints', in Hooshang Amirahmadi and Nader Entessar, eds, *Iran and the Arab World* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), p. 184. For an account of the seizure of the barracks see Jaber, *Hezbollah*, p. 108.

CIA-instigated assassination attempt on 8 March 1985 that killed more than 80 bystanders and injured 200.¹²²

In March 1984 President Gemayel cancelled the peace agreement and, in response, the Syrians put an end to the Iranian presence in the Bekaa. Hundreds of Hizballah militiamen and Iranian Pasdaran temporarily went to Tripoli, which was by now under the control of Shaykh Sha'ban,¹²³ but after President Khameneh'i visited Syria in September, the Pasdaran returned. The radio station, Sawt al-Islam, returned to the air, the Pasdaran appropriated Baalbek's teacher training college and established a hospital, and soon after Hizballah made its organization public.¹²⁴

As we saw above, the Pasdaran maintained privileged relations with the Da'wa. After the Iranian victory in Khorramshahr, Iraqi Da'wa militants, aided by infiltrators from Iran, committed acts of sabotage inside Iraq.¹²⁵ When on 12 December a number of explosions rocked Kuwait, which was aiding Iraq in its war against Iran, it soon transpired that the culprits were mostly Da'wa activists from Iraq and Lebanon.¹²⁶ When a number of these were arrested, tried and condemned to long prison sentences, militants in Lebanon began seizing Western hostages to gain their release, thus creating a new front in the struggle between militant Shi'i Islamism and the West.¹²⁷

What is often forgotten is that in a country where hostage taking had been a routine affair since the beginning of the civil war, the first foreign hostages had actually been Iranian, and it has been argued that their capture inaugurated the seizure of Westerners,¹²⁸ for it was only two weeks after the disappearance of Motevasselian and his companions that David Dodge, the acting president of AUB, was abducted. He was taken to Iran and released by the Iranians a year later.¹²⁹ Between January 1984 and 1988 dozens of Americans and Europeans were taken hostage by militants more or less closely identified with Hizballah,¹³⁰ including

122. Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft: US Guerrilla Warfare, Counter-insurgency, and Counter-terrorism, 1940-1990* (New York: Pentheon Books, 1992), p. 381.

123. Rieck, *Die Shiiten*, p. 595.

124. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī*, p. 93.

125. Hiro, *The Longest War*, p. 61.

126. Jaber, *Hezbollah*, pp. 127-8. For this and subsequent Da'wa actions in Kuwait see Fuller and Rahim Francke, *The Arab Shi'a*, pp. 162-3.

127. For a full history of the foreign hostages taken in Lebanon see Con Coughlin, *Hostage* (London: Warner Books, 1993).

128. McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft*, pp. 382, 563 n64, 564 n65.

129. Augustus Richard Norton, 'Making Enemies in South Lebanon: Harakat Amal, the IDF and South Lebanon', *Middle East Insight*, 3 (Januar-February 1984): 16.

130. See Rieck, *Die Shiiten*, pp. 593-4, 599 n18, 600 n23, and 601 n30 for lists of American, French and British hostages, respectively.

Imad Mughniyya, who by then was closely associated with the Pasdaran. While the Iranian government has denied all involvement,¹³¹ there is sufficient circumstantial evidence to state that high-ranking members of the Iranian regime were indeed involved in the seizure of Western hostages in Lebanon.¹³² The Iranians dealt with several of the hostage takers directly, on some occasions providing them with diplomatic passports.¹³³ To Western governments it became clear that to gain the freedom of their hostages, they had to deal with the Iranian government. In Iran, a group of relatively moderate leaders around Rafsanjani had concluded that Iran had to reduce its diplomatic isolation and, as if to underline this shift towards *realpolitik*, Mohtashami was recalled from Damascus and given the ministry of the interior in 1985.¹³⁴ In the same year Rafsanjani intervened to resolve a crisis started by Hizballah's hijacking of TWA flight 847, undertaken to secure the release of Lebanese prisoners held in Israel.¹³⁵ A dialogue ensued between the men around Rafsanjani and the Reagan administration, and as a result of these contacts three hostages were freed between September 1985 and November 1986, while in exchange Iran received badly needed weapons. But then the group around S. Mehdi Hashemi, who headed the Unit for Liberation Movements within the Pasdaran, leaked news of these contacts to the Lebanese magazine *al-Shira'*, which published them on 3 November 1986, triggering the Iran-Contra affair. Rafsanjani ended the tentative *rapprochement*, and the freedom of the remaining hostages was delayed until after Khomeini's death.¹³⁶ In Iran Hashemi was arrested and executed a year later on a variety of charges unrelated to Lebanon, and his organization was put under the wing of the foreign ministry.¹³⁷ In a separate deal, two French

131. To glimpse official Iranian statements, see Ramazani, *Revolutionary Iran*, pp. 189-92.

132. For details of connections between some notorious hostage-takers and Iran, see Norton, 'Lebanon: The Internal Conflict and the Iranian Connection', pp. 128-9.

133. For details see Jaber, *Hezbollah*, pp. 116-20.

134. Maziar Behrooz, 'Trends in the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1979-1988', in Nikki R. Keddie and Mark J. Gasiorowski, eds, *Neither East nor West: Iran, The Soviet Union and the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 23-8.

135. Augustus Richard Norton, 'Walking between Raindrops: Hizballah in Lebanon', *Mediterranean Politics*, 3:1 (Summer 1998): 91.

136. See James A. Bill, 'The US Overture to Iran, 1985-1986: An Analysis', in Keddie and Gasiorowski, eds, *Neither East nor West*, pp. 166-79; and James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 307-13.

137. His brother's father-in-law, Ayatollah Montazeri, intervened on his behalf with Khomeini, but Khomeini's order to commute the death penalty to internal exile arrived after he had been executed. Wilfried Buchta, 'Die Inquisition der Islamischen Republik Iran. Einige Anmerkungen zum Sondergerichtshof der Geistlichkeit', in

hostages were released in Lebanon and the French government consented to repay part of a loan owed to Iran since pre-revolutionary times.

President Amin Gemayel's provocative attempts to subdue Shi'is,¹³⁸ and his indifference to moderate Shi'is who had welcomed his presidency, drove more and more Shi'is into the arms of Hizballah,¹³⁹ but Hizballah's ascendancy did not eliminate Amal, which continued to enjoy full Syrian support. With Hizballah's suicide missions having seriously weakened the Lebanese state's presence in west Beirut, in February 1984 Amal, in alliance with the SSNP, captured west Beirut from the Lebanese army and Sunni militias after Berri had hinted that Shi'i soldiers in the army should resign.¹⁴⁰ Hizballah had not yet made itself known, but its militants took part in the offensive under the umbrella of Amal and the victory meant that they could now be active in west Beirut.¹⁴¹ But by May Amal and Hizballah had parted ways: Amal participated in a government of national unity after President Gemayel annulled the treaty with Israel, whereas Hizballah maintained its opposition to the status quo and increased its presence in Beirut. With the capture of west Beirut by Muslim forces in 1984, Iran became more active. At the behest of Nabih Berri, now a minister, diplomatic relations were restored with Iran,¹⁴² and when the new Iranian chargé arrived in Beirut, he received a triumphal welcome.¹⁴³

The rule of the militias hit cosmopolitan west Beirut very hard. Although Nabih Berri and the Amal leadership tried to maintain law and order, their fighters were mostly men of humble background who resented the privileges they believed that the inhabitants of west Beirut enjoyed. Consequently, when they gained control of the area, they often had little compunction about taking what they, the *mustad'afin*, thought they had been denied. Moreover, the takeover by the militias led quite a number of criminals without any political agenda to join them so as to partake of

Rainer Brunner, Monika Gronke, Jens Peter Laut and Ulrich Rebstock, eds, *Islamstudien ohne Ende: Festschrift für Werner Ende zum 65. Geburtstag* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), pp. 70–2.

138. For details see Rosiny, *Islamismus*, pp. 63 and 115.

139. Augustus Richard Norton, 'Lebanon: The Internal Conflict and the Iranian Connection', in John L. Esposito, *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1990), pp. 120–1; Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvatāt tā pīrūzī*, pp. 82–8; and Rieck, *Die Schiiten*, pp. 429–43.

140. For details see Rieck, *Die Schiiten*, pp. 513–16.

141. Andreas Rieck, 'Abschied vom "Revolutionsexport"? Expansion und Rückgang des iranischen Einflusses im Libanon 1979–1989', *Beiträge zur Konfliktforschung*, 20:2 (1990): 87.

142. Rosiny, *Islamismus*, p. 64; Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvatāt tā pīrūzī*, p. 85.

143. Yves Gonzalez-Quijano, 'Les interprétations d'un rite: célébrations de la 'Achoura au Liban', *Maghreb-Machrek*, 115 (January–March 1987): 23–4.

the loot. Moreover, Amal had to finance its activities, which led some members to establish protection rackets.¹⁴⁴

The more radical Islamists benefited from the near lawlessness in west Beirut. As we saw earlier, in May 1984 Hizballah was formed as a unified organization and was subsequently able to establish a permanent presence in a number of places in Beirut. Bearded revolutionaries arrived on the scene, posters of Khomeini were plastered on walls, insufficiently covered women were harassed and shops selling alcoholic beverages were bombed. For a while it seemed as though Beirut's fabled *joie de vivre* had become a victim of official Iranian puritanism.¹⁴⁵ Parallel with these attacks on manifestations of Western 'decadence', Hizballah launched a terror campaign against individual American and European residents of Beirut, a number of whom were assassinated or kidnapped. The embassies of some Arab states that were hostile to Iran were also targeted,¹⁴⁶ as were Communist party members, in the course of which 'dozens, if not hundreds' were brutally killed.¹⁴⁷

In the South Hizballah concentrated its attacks on the Israelis. These proved so effective that in the face of mounting casualties the Israelis had retreated from most of Lebanon by June 1985, leaving only a 'security zone' adjacent to Israel's northern border under their occupation, roughly 10 per cent of Lebanese territory. In the wake of their departure, Hizballah established itself in areas that had hitherto been dominated by Amal. This led to friction between the two Shi'i movements and affected their respective allies, Iran and Syria. Tensions between Teheran and Damascus crystallized over what attitude to adopt *vis-à-vis* the Palestinians, who began trickling back into Lebanon in 1985. Syria gave Amal *carte blanche* to prevent that, leading to armed clashes between Amal and the Palestinians.¹⁴⁸ These clashes alarmed the Iranian leadership and in May Ayatollah Montazeri, Khomeini's designated successor and father of the late Mohammad Montazeri, commissioned a high-ranking delegation led by Mehdi Karrubi to travel to Lebanon to explore ways to end them. Parallel to this mission, another mission, headed by the general director of the ministry of foreign affairs, Hosein Lavasani,

144. Rieck, *Die Schiiten*, pp. 552–9.

145. Jaber, *Hezbollah*, pp. 51–3; Rieck, *Die Schiiten*, pp. 591–7. For a journalistic and somewhat sensationalistic account of this period see Gilles Delafon, *Beyrouth: Les soldats de l'Islam* (Paris: Stock, 1989). One must note that many Amal militiamen were involved in these activities as well.

146. Rieck, *Die Schiiten*, p. 592.

147. Norton, 'Walking between Raindrops': 89.

148. Elaine Hagopian, ed., *AMAL and the Palestinians: Understanding the Battle of the Camps* (Belmont, Mass.: Arab-American University Graduates, Occasional Papers, No. 9, 1985).

travelled to Lebanon for the same purpose.¹⁴⁹ Neither mission achieved much, reflecting Amal's indifference to Iranian wishes.

As Amal militiamen laid siege on a number of refugee camps and prevented the delivery of food supplies,¹⁵⁰ the situation became so desperate that at one point Sayyid Fadlallah issued a fatwa to permit the consumption of cat meat. Though Hizballah and their Iranian allies stayed out of the fighting, they helped supply the trapped Palestinians with victuals, which earned them Palestinian sympathy and may have inspired some Palestinians to emulate the Hizballah tactic of suicide attacks.¹⁵¹

With Israel gone from most Lebanese territory, the Syrian leadership became nervous about the spread of fundamentalism. As Hizballah became ever more entrenched in the South after Israel's withdrawal, it spread its brand of puritanism here too, banning the sale of alcohol, parties, dancing, mixed swimming on the long beaches of Tyre, and closing down cafés in a pattern reminiscent of post-revolutionary events in Iran. As a result the economy of the area suffered and parts of the population were alienated from Hizballah.¹⁵²

In the Bekaa the Syrians tried to bring Hizballah activities under their control, and in 1986 this led to serious fighting in Mashghara between Hizballah and the pro-Syrian SSNP. While the Iranians criticized the SSNP, they did not openly challenge Syria, which they needed as an ally against Iraq.¹⁵³ In the meantime, Amal was getting nowhere in its fight against the PLO and the left in Beirut, which were getting the upper hand in the fighting. To prevent the defeat of their ally, the Syrians reoccupied west Beirut in February 1987 and, in the course of their intervention, 23 Hizballah fighters were massacred.¹⁵⁴ This put Iran's ally on Lebanon's domestic scene directly at odds with Iran's strategic ally against Iraq, and the Iranian government chose the latter: Hizballah's reaction was subdued and its spokesman declared that the interests of *wilayat al-faqih* (namely Iran) dictated

149. Ramazani, *Revolutionary Iran*, p. 187.

150. For a personal account of one who lived through the war of the camps, see Pauline Cutting, *Children of the Siege* (London: Heinemann, 1988).

151. Personal communication, Stephan Rosiny, 19 May 2004. According to As'ad AbuKhalil, Hizballah is not the only Lebanese party to have carried out suicide missions against Israeli targets. He mentions the Syrian Social National Party, the Lebanese Communist party, the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, the Progressive Socialist Party, and various Palestinian organizations. 'Ideology and Practice': 398–9.

152. Jaber, *Hezbollah*, pp. 29–30.

153. Ioannides, 'The PLO and the Islamic Revolution in Iran': 99.

154. Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, translated by John Richardson (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies in association with I.B.Tauris, 1993), pp. 314–15.

extreme restraint.¹⁵⁵ In Qom, however, Lebanese clerics and seminarians held a protest demonstration.¹⁵⁶ Iran mediated and the families of the killed went to Iran where Khomeini received them.¹⁵⁷ Hizballah now learnt it had to live with Syria.

After 1985 Hizballah took credit for the Western and Israeli retreat from Lebanon and dedicated the bulk of its resources, many of them Iranian subsidies, towards building an infrastructure that would lead to the creation of an Islamic republic in Lebanon. The blueprint for such a state was apparently prepared at a conclave in Teheran in early 1986, when Lebanese and Iranian clerics hammered out the text of a constitution for an Islamic republic in Lebanon that would grant Shi'i clerics paramount authority while providing for local autonomy in areas dominated by 'minorities'.¹⁵⁸ Nabih Berri and Amal dissociated themselves from this idea and supported that of a 'majority democracy', which would, of course, enhance Shi'is' political weight, given their demographic strength.¹⁵⁹

In the competition between Amal and Hizballah, the latter had the advantage of large sums of Iranian money, so could pay its fighters better than Amal, leading Amal leaders to refer to their rival as the 'Petro Party'.¹⁶⁰ Armed clashes between the two began in September 1987, but what triggered a full-blown intra-Shi'i civil war was the abduction in February 1988 of William R. Higgins, an American officer working for the United Nations. Hizballah was believed to be behind the operation, but Amal condemned it and did its best to find Higgins, rounding up known Hizballah militants in the process.¹⁶¹ Combat began in May. Amal won in the South, but in Beirut's suburbs Hizballah received much Iranian help. In April an Amal official accused the Iranian ambassador, Ahmad Dastmalchian, of personally supervising Pasadaran assistance to Hizballah.¹⁶² Since Syria would not let Iranian fighters enter Lebanon through Syrian territory, the Libyans mediated between Walid Jumblatt and the Iranians to facilitate the passage of Iranian Pasdaran through the port of Khaldah and PSP-controlled areas, for which Iran reportedly paid \$3 million.¹⁶³ Aided by Iranian revolutionary guards and Iranian money, Hizballah almost eliminated Amal in the southern suburbs. Syria was loath to allow Hizballah to establish control and wanted to intervene to prevent an Islamist

155. AbuKhalil, 'Syria and the Shiites': 15–16.

156. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī*, p. 107.

157. Sharāra, p. 224, as quoted in Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī*, p. 107.

158. Rosiny, *Islamismus*, pp. 216–17. Excerpts of the draft can be found in *Cahiers de l'Orient*, 2 (1986): 248–50. Other sources deny the existence of such a document.

159. Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon*, pp. 316–17.

160. *Ibid.*, p. 317.

161. For details see Jaber, *Hezbollah*, pp. 32–3.

162. *FBIS-NES-88-070*, 12 April 1988, p. 54.

163. *FBIS-NES-88-118*, 20 June 1988, p. 33.

victory, but the Iranians were weary of the Syrians gaining control of the hostages. In a clear indication of at least some Iranian complicity in the hostage drama, Iran's deputy foreign minister, Hosein Sheikholeslam, said that Iran would agree to a Syrian military intervention in southern Beirut only if the hostage situation were resolved 'in a way that serves the objectives for which they were kidnapped'. But the Iranian government could not afford to alienate the Syrians, especially since from 1987 Iranian troops had begun to face reversals in the fighting inside Iraq. And so a compromise was worked out whereby the Syrians assumed direct control of the southwestern suburbs, but did not gain control over the hostages.¹⁶⁴

In the face of mounting difficulties in the war with Iraq, pragmatic elements in the Iranian regime, led by Rafsanjani, began to advocate an end to the war. On 2 June 1988 Rafsanjani was appointed acting commander-in-chief and thereby took over the conduct of Iranian foreign policy. In July 1988 the Iranian government accepted UN Security Council Resolution 598 of July 1987, and the long Iran/Iraq war ended.¹⁶⁵ The Iranian government was now primarily preoccupied with obtaining a condemnation of Iraq as the aggressor, so had an interest in curtailing the anti-Western activities of their Lebanese allies. In August the Pasdaran were withdrawn from both the southern suburbs and the Bekaa Valley.¹⁶⁶ In September Mohsen Rafiqdust lost his job as minister of Revolutionary Guards, and Hizballah lost one of its most fervent friends within the Iranian regime.¹⁶⁷ Iran reduced its subsidies to Hizballah, and began actively negotiating with Western countries over the hostages.

Iran and Syria now mediated between Amal and Hizballah and, when the Syrians threatened a *rapprochement* with Iraq, the Iranians conceded to Syrian hegemony in Lebanon. So a truce was signed in Damascus on 30 January 1989 between the two Shi'i movements that was more favourable to Amal and Syria. Amal's preponderance in the South was recognized, but Hizballah was allowed to be socially and politically active there and to pursue its war against the Israeli

164. Hunter, *Iran and the World*, pp. 122–7. Sheikholeslam's quote is from 'Beirut Suburbs: War Sparks Regional Tensions', *Washington Post*, 24 May 1988, p. A18.

165. For more information see Cameron Hume, *The United Nations, Iran, and Iraq: How Peacemaking Changed* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) and Anthony Parsons, 'Iran and the United Nations, with particular reference to the Iran/Iraq war', in Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Manshour Varasteh, eds, *Iran and the International Community* (London: Routledge, 1991). For an insider's account see Giandomenico Picco, *Man without a Gun: One Diplomat's Secret Struggle to Free the Hostages, Fight Terrorism, and End a War* (New York: Times Books, 1999), pp. 56–96.

166. *FBIS-NES-88-171*, 2 September 1988, p. 35.

167. For details see Bahman Bakhtiari, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran: The Institutionalization of Factional Politics* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 1996), pp. 156–7.

occupation of the 'Security Zone'.¹⁶⁸ Syrian troops would occupy the southern suburbs, Hizballah's stronghold.¹⁶⁹ Clashes between Amal and Hizballah continued, however, and another agreement was signed on 5 November 1990.¹⁷⁰ The conflict between the two ended only when Amal, but not Hizballah, disarmed as a result of the Ta'if Agreement discussed in Chapter 12.

By highlighting the Iranian involvement with Hizballah one risks giving the impression that Hizballah was merely an instrument of the Iranian leadership's desire to spread the revolution and to gain a say in Middle Eastern affairs beyond its borders. Such a view would be just as absurd as to conclude that the Maronite militias, which received \$150 million from Israel during Yitzhak Rabin's government in 1974–77,¹⁷¹ were nothing other than the instruments of Israeli policy, or that General Aoun in 1990 was motivated by nothing other than serving Saddam Hussein. The various armed groups in Lebanon's long and uncivil *bellum omnium contra omnes* all had their own reasons to do what they were doing, but when a congruence of interests between them and a foreign power appeared, they were happy to seek the help of the outsiders against their own compatriots.¹⁷²

For the policy-makers of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon was the ideal locus for realizing the supranational pretensions of the Iranian revolution. The disappearance of the state from the Bekaa Valley, an area into which the writ of Beirut had never fully extended anyway, allowed Shi'i Islamists to set up an Islamic republic *en miniature* for a while, and when the changing fortunes of the war extended Hizballah power to other areas of Lebanon, the Islamic revolution seemed to be on the march within Lebanon. And, as far as Iranian revolutionaries were concerned, that boded well for the rest of the Arab world. In January 1984 Iran's former ambassador to Lebanon said: 'If we concentrate on the point that Lebanon is considered the heart of the Arab countries in the Middle East, a platform from which different ideas have been directed to the rest of the Arab world, we can conclude that the existence of an Islamic movement in that country will result in Islamic movements throughout the Arab world.'¹⁷³

168. The concessions to Amal so angered Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, Hizballah's military commander in the South, that he went to Iran for a while. He later returned and became secretary-general of Hizballah in 1992. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī*, p. 115.

169. Jaber, *Hezbollah*, pp. 34–5; Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī*, p. 115.

170. For English translations of the two agreements see *The Beirut Review*, 1:1 (Spring 1991): 176–8.

171. Jaber, *Hezbollah*, p. 17.

172. For a detailed study of the alliance between Israel and some Maronite groups, see Kirsten E. Schulze, *Israel's Covert Diplomacy in Lebanon* (London: Macmillan Press, 1998).

173. As quoted in Haleh Vaziri, 'Iran's Involvement in Lebanon: Polarization and Radicalization of Militant Islamic Movements', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern*

In its attempts to spread the Islamicization of the Middle East, the Islamic Republic was careful to adopt Islamic rather than Shi'i rhetoric. The numerous Iranian emissaries to Lebanon kept stressing Muslim unity in the 1980s and, as if to underline this theme, the Lebanese Sunni group most indebted to Iran called itself the Unity Movement. Founded in 1982 by Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban (1930–98), it soon gained control of Tripoli; Sha'ban was a member of the Iranian-sponsored Council of Lebanon. But in the autumn of 1985 the Syrians entered Tripoli and crushed the Unity Movement, whereupon the Iranians brokered an agreement between him and the Syrians that allowed him to remain the leader of a now disarmed organization.¹⁷⁴ But ultimately Iran's official friends in Lebanon came almost exclusively from the Shi'i community, even though even here they probably constituted only a minority of Shi'is.

Internationally, the success of Hizballah in driving out the Israelis from most of Lebanon by 1985 seemed to confirm the Iranian leadership's claim to be in the forefront of the struggle against Zionism. But from 1987 pragmatic elements in Iran's leadership, primarily Rafsanjani, began to reorient Iranian foreign policy towards a pursuit of the country's national interest, which led to an acceptance of the cease-fire with Iraq and the release of Western hostages. Some Lebanese radicals now felt abandoned by Iran, and Iran lost some of its influence among the Shi'i community. The idea of establishing an Islamic republic in Lebanon faded away for all practical purposes, and the 1986 draft, if it ever existed, was forgotten. Moreover, the end of the cold war deprived Iran of anti-Western leverage and made it imperative to come to an understanding with the West. As the 1980s drew to a close, a series of domestic, regional and global events proved once again that, in Albert Hirschmann's famous theorem, 'as soon as a social phenomenon has been fully explained by a variety of converging approaches and is therefore understood in its majestic inevitability and perhaps even permanence, it vanishes.'¹⁷⁵

For Iran and Lebanon 1989 was a watershed. In Iran, Khomeini died on 3 June 1989, and it was a sign of things to come that Nabih Berri attended his funeral. A few months later, the various parties of the Lebanese civil war, exhausted, signed the Ta'if Agreement that paved the way for an end to the conflict.

Studies, 16:2 (Winter 1992): 4.

174. A. Nizar Hamzeh and R. Hrair Dekmejian, 'The Islamic Spectrum of Lebanese Politics', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 16:3 (Spring 1993): 32–3; Norton, 'Lebanon: The Internal Conflict and the Iranian Connection', p. 118.
175. Albert O. Hirschmann, 'The Turn to Authoritarianism in Latin America and the Search for its Economic Determinants', in David Collier, ed., *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 98.

The Cleric as Organic Intellectual: Revolutionary Shi'ism in the Lebanese *Hawzas*

Rula Jurdi Abisaab

RESTORING VALUE TO THE SHI'I MADRASA

The emergence of the Lebanese *hawza* in the late 1970s marks a watershed in the nature and forms of religious life and clerical activity among the Shi'is of Lebanon. In modern Lebanese parlance, *hawza* refers to a new type of religious seminary that differs from the traditional Lebanese *madrassa* in that it is more institutionalized and bureaucratized. Whereas the traditional 'Amili *madrassa* was typically founded by a religious scholar upon his return from Najaf and very often closed when this scholar died, the *hawza* has permanent structures and is rarely tied to one individual: it is governed by a board of trustees and has a standardized curriculum.¹ In 1993 there were 16 *hawzas* in Lebanon. Four were located in the southern suburbs of Beirut, one in Bir al-'Abid in Beirut, four in the Bekaa Valley (of which one in Baalbek), and seven in the South. There were around 600 Shi'i religious scholars (*shaykh*) in these *hawzas*, each of which had 40 to 50 students. The most prominent and active of the *hawzas* were those of the southern suburbs of Beirut (al-Dahiya), an area known for the concentration of a large Shi'i population that forms one component of the 'belt of poverty' stretching around Beirut. Hizballah founded three of the fifteen Lebanese *hawzas*: one each in Beirut, the Bekaa

1. The word *hawza* means something different in Iraq and Iran, where it refers to the ensemble of *madrasas* located in one city. One thus speaks of the Najaf *hawza* or the Qom *hawza* (in Persian: *howzeh-ye elmiyeh*), each of which comprises a number of different and independent schools, rather like the colleges of Oxford. For sources on the Najaf seminaries see Chapter 1, footnote 22.

(Baalbek) and the South (‘Ayn Qana).² The Beiruti and ‘Amili *hawzas* also had branches for women. The *hawza* is but one feature of an historical process that has been evolving since the 1950s and that has been marked by rural–urban migration, socio-economic displacement and political radicalization, particularly in the Jabal ‘Amil. These forces, nurtured locally and nationally, all shaped a new voice for political Shi‘ism, a voice that adapted the ideals of Iran’s 1978–9 revolution and wrote them into the Lebanese context.

In this chapter I take as a case study one of Hizballah’s *hawzas*, namely, al-Rasul al-Akram, to explore the meaning of revolutionary Islamic education for Lebanese Shi‘is as well as the local, national and global projections of the *hawzas*’ discourse on modernity. I argue that the transformation of religious education in late twentieth-century Lebanon is a manifestation of three interconnected historical and sociological developments: the forceful entry of new families and social classes to clerical professions, the emergence of a new type of religious ‘organic intellectual’ and, finally, the attempt to define and adopt an ‘Islamic modernity’. Let us consider these developments in turn.

First, there is the democratization of religious learning. The new *hawzas* posed a challenge to elitist and family-transmitted scholastic traditions in Jabal ‘Amil and brought about a status reversal for displaced Shi‘i youth from working-class backgrounds whose lives lacked the educational stability or socio-economic growth necessary for self-actualization. The seminary students who identify with Hizballah are largely drawn from lower social classes and families that lack the traditions of Shi‘i scholasticism. This challenge to the older traditions of learning must be seen against the background of overall socio-economic changes. An incremental process of rural deterioration in the Shi‘i regions, combined with demographic change and marginalization at the hands of the Lebanese state, popularized new modes of thought, of which the Islamist cultural and political revolution represented by Hizballah is one. The production of Islamist ideas, in turn, led to the emergence of new forms of economic activity, wage labour and professions tied directly to the institutions, seminaries, schools, organizations and overall mobilization activities of Hizballah. Equally important is the fact that Shi‘is of the Bekaa found in Hizballah’s *hawzas* an expression for their social discontent. It was also a way to break the monopoly of ‘Amili *sayyids* and learned families (*buyutat al-‘ilm*) on ulema recruitment, for in the past the overwhelming number of scholastic families such as al-Amin, Sharafeddin, Muruwwa (Muroeh) and Sadreddin were drawn from Jabal ‘Amil. Many Lebanese, including Southern Shi‘is, perceived the Shi‘is of the Bekaa, who suffered grave economic problems, as ‘backward’ rural people who

2. Interviews with Shaykh Ibrahim Suwaydan, an advanced student and teacher at al-Rasul al-Akram *hawza*, Dr al-Haj Hasan, the Education Bureau director of Hizballah, and Tariq Ibrahim, a journalist and correspondent for *al-Hayat* newspaper.

were organized as ‘*asha’ir*’ (clans) and did not cultivate scholarly traditions.³ The leadership role that Subhi al-Tufayli, a native of Brital near Baalbek, played during the formative phase of Hizballah, illustrates this weakening of ‘Amili hegemony. It is not surprising therefore that Hizballah’s *hawzas* and other institutions are very attractive to many Shi‘is in the Bekaa.⁴

Second, the educational programmes of Hizballah’s *hawzas* furnish the Shi‘i lower class with ‘organic’ intellectuals, used here in the Gramscian sense of intellectuals who are rooted in society and who serve and promote the interests of the lower class.⁵ In the Lebanese context, the Hizballah type of organic intellectual emerges from a rural base and maintains links with a preindustrial web of social and economic relations, yet at the same time cultivates new roles in the urban industrial arena of Beirut. Hizballah’s leaders emphasize the importance of techno-economic knowledge and scientific developments, which acquire legal justification in Shi‘i society through the process of *ijtihad* (rational inference). Hizballah regards the appropriation of these modern resources as essential to revolutionary progress.⁶ Whereas earlier generations of traditional ulema, including Musa Sadr, tried to mediate occasionally between the local peasants of Shi‘i towns and the state administration, Hizballah has been creating its autonomous system of services and occupations for the countryside.⁷ This system relies on capitalist investment

3. See Waqḍāh Sharāra, *Dawlat Hizb Allāh: Lubnān mujtama‘an wa islamiyyan* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahār, 1996), pp. 25–6, 59–60.

4. As evidence, for instance, in the parliamentary elections of 1992, when a Hizballah-sponsored electoral list received the overwhelming support of voters in the Bekaa, resulting in eight deputies being elected of which half were direct Hizballah members. See Ḥasan Faḍl Allāh, *al-Khiyār al-ākhar: Hizb Allāh al-sīra al-dhātīyya wa’l-mawqif* (Beirut: Dār al-Hādī, 1994).

5. Gramsci distinguished ‘organic’ intellectuals from the ‘traditional’ intellectuals, including ‘ecclesiastics’, who might have a peasant rural basis but serve a number of social classes through their various professions. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith, editors and translators (New York: International Publishers, 1971), pp. 3–4, 15–16.

6. Interview with Dr al-Haj Hasan. See the websites of Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah’s al-Mabarrat association, and Hizballah’s Emdad Committee for Islamic Charity. See also, Annabelle Böttcher, ‘Ayatollah Fadlallāh und seine Wohltätigkeitsorganisation al-Mabarrāt’, in Rainer Brunner, Monika Gronke, Jens Peter Laut and Ulrich Rebstock, eds, *Islamstudien ohne Ende: Festschrift für Werner Ende zum 65. Geburtstag* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), pp. 41–7.

7. See Malek Abisaab, “‘Don’t they all look like Cows?’: Gendered Space in the Lebanese Women Tobacco Strike of 1970”, in Ghazi-Walid Falah and Caroline Nagel, eds, *Geographies of Muslim Women: Gender, Religion and Spain* (New York: Guilford Publications, 2005), pp. 20–3. Abisaab highlights the significance of the sit-in

carried out collectively by the party and its financiers within licit Islamic boundaries. The Hizballah organic intellectual is a public figure who fits Gramsci's definition in that he articulates the sentiments and social and material aspirations of the subaltern class, raises political consciousness about them and works through civil and military institutions to change the political system to achieve dominance.⁸

Third, the seminary imparts revolutionary Shi'ism to its students as a holistic and life-directional experience. It insists on its self-generating modernity, structurally tied to *ijtihad*, while partaking in a discourse of cultural conflict with the 'West'. Hizballah confronts selected indices of Western modernity in a controlled polemic on how to know this Western modernity and counter it by an equally potent Islamic modernity that promises human liberation and portends cultural superiority. Despite Hizballah's (and other Islamists') claims to the contrary, the 'Islam versus West' conflict is rooted in experiences of European colonialism, interrupted capitalist developments and Western industrialization.⁹ As a post-colonial Islamist project, Hizballah's thought struggles against the binarisms and taxonomies, biological and cultural, of the earlier phase of Western modernity despite these traits having undergone transformation in the current postmodern globalized order.¹⁰ Hizballah's anti-secularism as such is not simply 'fundamentalist', even with respect to gendered social roles, work patterns and cultural institutions, fields on which a range of legal and social positions are taken by individual Hizballah member or sympathizers.¹¹ There is no return to a fixed his-

of Shi'i women tobacco workers at the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council in 1970, when they asked Musa Sadr to mediate between them and the government as well as the State Tobacco Monopoly to achieve job permanency. Sadr's half-hearted attempts to address the problem failed.

8. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 4. The general doctrines, political directives, and goals of Hizballah in their entirety reinforce this point. For a rich and accurate account of Hizballah's aims, see Amal Saad-Ghorayeb's *Hizballah: Politics and Religion* (London: Pluto Press, 2002).
9. I would like to thank Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlohr for her valuable comments about Hizballah's discourse on modernity. Our email correspondence on this question was illuminating.
10. For a representative scholarship on postcolonial and postmodernist writings and their critique, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Press, 1978); Homi Bhaba, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); Gyan Prakash, 'Post-colonial Criticism and Indian Historiography', *Social Text*, 31/32 (1992): 8-19; and Arif Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997).
11. See Talib Aziz, 'Fadlallah and the Remaking on the *Marja'iyya*', in Linda S. Walbridge, ed., *The Most Learned of the Shi'a* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 208-11. On questions of marital relations, intercourse, abortion and

torical past, but rather a revisioning of passage to the postmodern world outside Euro-American secularism. This passage has mixed attributes because it is rife with contradictions and tensions.¹² On the one hand, the advocates of the modern *hawzas* have framed a discourse of alternative modernity, a decentring of the West in its proclaimed story of a unilinear, secular progression towards democracy and freedom. But while the *hawzas* reject the geographical and cultural exclusivity of Western modernity, they nonetheless aspire to be *modern*, thus assigning a positive value to modernity after all. It is therefore debatable whether Hizballah's Islamization of modernity succeeds in breaking away from the hegemonic model.

I take this polarization of Islam versus the West in the Islamist narrative of Hizballah as a constructed rather than factual reality, thus rejecting the notion of a Huntingtonian 'clash of civilizations' as the basis for understanding Hizballah's (or any Islamist movement's) genesis and aims.¹³ Rather, the kind of socio-religious movement vested in the revolutionary and reformist *hawzas* of Lebanon reflect the interconnectedness of multiple national and cultural entities within a global order. In the new global order, conceptualized as 'Empire' by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, the language of revolutionary Islam contests the hegemonic positioning of the American West through a set of beliefs and practices that emerge precisely from the endless exchanges between 'Easts' and 'Westes' and proves the fallacy of fixed geopolitical-cultural boundaries.¹⁴ The outlook and performance of Hizballah coincides with 'antisystemic struggles' that kick against the few sovereign states exploiting international labour and resources, and push against the oppressive space of the globalized world-economy.¹⁵ As long as Hizballah remains outside the state and is not integrated into the communicative networks of state-world relations, it remains 'antisystemic'. Moreover, as Hardt and Negri argue, movements

masturbation Fadlallah advances legal opinions that are popular among Shi'i women. Many of these run counter to the legal rulings of leading exemplars such as Ayatollah Khomeini.

12. This formulation is inspired by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 147-9.
13. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (London: Touchstone Books, 1998), Introduction and Chapter 2. See also Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizballah*, pp. 88-90. I question Saad-Ghorayeb's argument that Hizballah's 'civilizational struggle' with the West reveals an intrinsic rejection of Western 'values, beliefs, institutions and social structures' (p. 88). I do not believe that the struggle originates at the level of culture but that culture becomes a major arena in which a struggle over geopolitical and economic power takes place.
14. See Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 56.
15. For a study of 'antisystemic movements' as socio-political forces undermining the capitalist world-system, see Giovanni Arrighi, Terrence K. Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Antisystemic Movements* (New York: Verso, 1989).

like Hizballah's are 'at once economic, political and cultural – and hence they are biopolitical struggles, struggles over the form of life ... creating new public spaces and new forms of community'.¹⁶ In this reading of the envisaged Shi'i order of Hizballah, the private is public and the public is personal and thus a source of individual identity.

A wide range of Iranian narratives and commentaries on postcolonial history, state power and the proper location of religion in society was already weaving together threads of Islamic liberation theology, third worldism and nativism within a framework of an anti-Western and anti-Shah movement when the Lebanese civil war and the Israeli invasion of 1978 radicalized many Shi'is. Opponents of the status quo in Lebanon were aware of these ideological developments¹⁷ and, because of its triumph in Iran, Iranian revolutionary thought was in a structurally unique position to become the source of inspiration for disgruntled Lebanese Muslims in general and Shi'is in particular.¹⁸

FROM MADRASA TO HAWZA

Religious education is not new to Lebanon. *Madrasas* reached their zenith in the Jabal 'Amil in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, around which time the consequences of the Ottoman–Safavid political struggle, the scarcity of professional posts for Shi'i jurists in the Ottoman Empire, the political suppression of leading ulema and the Safavid espousal of Twelver Shi'ism all contributed to the migration of scholastic 'Amili families to Iraq, Iran, Mecca and India.¹⁹ As Najaf flourished into a reputable centre for Shi'i learning during the mid-sixteenth cen-

16. Ibid.

17. The transmission of these ideas from Iran to Lebanon in the 1970s remains to be studied in greater detail. For now one can surmise that the Iranian oppositionists active in Lebanon (discussed in detail in Chapter 8) played a role in their dissemination.

18. For rich and varied assessments of these developments in Iran consult Said Amir Arjomand, 'The Reform Movement and the Debate on Modernity and Tradition in Contemporary Iran', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 34:4 (2002): 719–21; Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996); Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); and Ali Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the 20th Century* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

19. See Muhsin al-Amīn, *Khīṭat Jabal 'Āmil* (Beirut: Maṭba'at al-Inṣāf, 1403/1983), pp. 182–6. For a fuller assessment of this development, see Rula Jurdi Abisaab, 'Shi'ite Beginnings and Scholastic Tradition in Jabal 'Amil in Lebanon', *The Muslim World*, 98:1 (January 1999): 1–21; and Rula Abisaab, *Converting Persia: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), Introduction and Chapter 1.

tury, the *madrasas* of Jabal 'Amil had already shrunk in number and intellectual scope and, by the late Ottoman period and early twentieth century, they were moribund.²⁰ In the early twentieth century dynamic discussions about educational reform and the future of the religious schools and seminaries ensued among 'Amili and Najafi scholars alike. A handful of ulema, including Muhsin Sharara (1901–46) and Muhsin al-Amin (1865–1952), strove to revive religious learning in Jabal 'Amil and subject it to state regulation, but their efforts yielded only limited results.²¹ Several *madrasas* closed down after their founders' death or migration to Najaf in the first few decades of the twentieth century.²² It appears that prominent religious families or families with political clout controlled religious learning in Jabal 'Amil, preventing students of modest backgrounds from travelling to Najaf to obtain scholarly credentials. While students of the 'Amili schools came from all social classes, those from families with a scholastic tradition were numerically dominant.²³

'Amili magazines, personal biographies and popular literature illuminate important shifts in the character, role and demand for religious education in Shi'i society. The steady decrease in the number of turbaned full-time ulema and religious instructors was the object of recurring complaints from scholars like Muhammad Jawad Mughniyya. In the 1930s, two 'Amili scholars from theologian families took off their turbans on their return from Najaf and declared their commitment to Marxist thought and ideology.²⁴ One of these, Husayn Muroeh (1908–87), ques-

20. For more on this topic see Sabrina Mervin, *Un réformisme chiite: Ulémas et lettrés du Gabal 'Āmil (actuel Liban-Sud) de la fin de l'Empire ottoman à l'indépendance du Liban* (Paris: Karthala, 2000); Tamara Chalabi, 'Community and Nation-State: The Shi'is of Jabal 'Amil and the New Lebanon, 1918–1943' (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2003), pp. 269, 275–7.

21. See Muṣṭafā Bazzī, *Tatawwur al-ta'lim wa al-thaqāfa fī Jabal 'Āmil* (Lebanon: Hay'at Inma' al-Mintaqa al-Ḥudūdiyya, 1995), pp. 94–119; Werner Ende, 'From Revolt to Resignation: The Life of Shaykh Muhsin Sharāra', in Asma Afsaruddin and A. H. Mathias Zahniser, eds, *Humanism, Culture and Language in the Near East: Studies in Honor of Georg Krotkoff* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1997), pp. 61–70; and Sabrina Mervin, 'The Clerics of Jabal 'Amil and the Reform of Religious Teaching in Najaf Since the Beginning of the 20th Century', in Rainer Brunner and Werner Ende, eds, *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times: Religious Culture and Political History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), pp. 80–2.

22. Bazzī, *Tatawwur al-ta'lim*, pp. 106–9.

23. Ibid., pp. 109–10, 118–19.

24. Muḥammad Jawād Mughniyya, *al-Waḍ' al-ḥādīr fī Jabal 'Āmil: fī maṭla' al-istiqlāl bidāyat al-qahr wa'l-ḥirmān*, 3rd edn (Beirut: Dār al-Jawād, 1410/1990), pp. 56–7; 'Abbās Baydūn, ed., *Husayn Muruwwa: Wulidtu shaykhan wa amūtu ṭiflan* (Beirut: Dār al-Fārābī, 1990); Ḥabīb Sādiq, 'Muḥammad Sharāra: kātiban wa insānan', in *Wujūh thaqaḥiyya min al-Janūb* (Beirut: al-Majlis al-thaqafi li-Lubnān al-janūbī,

tioned the blind conformism of the Najaf *hawza* only to face social rejection, which left him in a state of intellectual and emotional confusion for some time. Muroeh started to look elsewhere for answers to his questions about the validity of certain forms of knowledge. On his second visit to Lebanon, possibly in the mid-1930s, he read the works of Isma'il Mazhar and Shibli al-Shumayyil on Darwin's theory of human evolution and drew connections between laws of nature and societal development.²⁵ He started to doubt society's need for religious guardians, namely the ulema, and their right to shape human behaviour.²⁶ To his chagrin, Muroeh faced serious accusations of atheism from the seminaries, which led to his abrupt dismissal from the Najaf *hawza*.²⁷ Conventional clerical training thus faced decisive challenges from socialist and nationalist anti-colonial political currents not only in cosmopolitan Lebanon, as might be expected, but even in the relatively more closed milieu of the 'Atabat.²⁸

In the first half of the twentieth century 70 notable Shi'i families from Jabal 'Amil (61) and the Bekaa (9) nurtured with difficulty a tradition of religious learning. By the 1990s, at least 120 'Amili and 100 Bekaa families outside the traditional notable elite had taken the lead in modern *hawza* education:²⁹ the new *hawza* had obviously found a way to make religious learning viable and relevant to Lebanese Shi'is in the late twentieth century. The resurgence of interest in religious learning of a new variety must be understood against the background of Shi'i local history, both in the South and in the Bekaa. This local history was marked by the deterioration since the 1950s of the Lebanese countryside, where a majority of Shi'is resided. Land shortage, a steady decline in agricultural revenues, lack of state-initiated reforms and the relative prosperity of urban areas led to a rural-urban migratory trend from Akkar, the Bekaa and the South to Beirut from the

1981), pp. 18–19; Peter Gran, 'Islamic Marxism in Comparative History: The Case of Lebanon, Reflections on the Recent Book of Husayn Muruwah', in Barbara Stowasser, ed., *The Islamic Impulse* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 106–20; and Silvia Naef, 'Shi'i-Shuyu'i or How to Become a Communist in a Holy City', in Brunner and Ende, eds, *The Twelver Shia*, p. 266.

25. Malek Abisaab, 'From Jabal 'Amil to Najaf to Moscow: The Quest of Husayn Muroeh', paper presented at the 2002 meeting of the Middle Eastern Studies Association, Washington, DC. The Lebanese thinker Shibli Shumayyil introduced Charles Darwin's *The Origin of the Species* to Arab readers and advocated socialism.
26. See Baydūn, ed., *Husayn Muruwwa*, pp. 39, 41, 56.
27. Muroeh was assassinated in 1987, and the Communist party accused Amal of engineering his death.
28. Malek Abisaab, 'From Jabal 'Amil to Najaf'. See also Muruwwa [Muroeh], *Wulidtu Shaykhan*, p. 16.
29. Sharāra, *Dawlat Hizb Allāh*, pp. 25–6, 56, 58.

mid-1950s to 1969.³⁰ In 1961 less than 0.5 per cent of peasants owned between 50 and 100 hectares. Capitalist investments, which neglected land reform, diminished the size of landholdings dramatically and changed the nature of ownership over a decade.³¹ In the mid-1960s thousands of Shi'is in the South experienced social displacement in addition to political radicalization in connection with the Palestinian armed struggle against Israel.³² The policies of the Lebanese state under Presidents Bechara El-Khoury (1946–52) and Camille Chamoun (1952–58) left the South, the Bekaa and Akkar largely undeveloped because these areas seemed irrelevant to tourism, commercial planning or banking and financial development.³³ These regions thus suffered from the combined effects of underdevelopment, population growth and unemployment, which accounts for the high rates of illiteracy among its populations from the mid-1950s until the early 1970s.³⁴

El-Khoury and Chamoun's policies shaped the opportunities and resources of the Shi'i working classes in the Bekaa and South during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The incremental historical developments outlined above led to episodes of peasant protests and labour unrest. The Shi'is thus experienced not one but several political 'awakenings', for there is no reason to take the movement of Musa Sadr as the starting point of Shi'i assertion. Sect-consciousness was but one option, and there were other forms of political activism that cut across sects, including communism and nationalism. In the 1960s hundreds of Shi'is in south Lebanon expressed class-based resistance to the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie controlling the state. This opposition was manifest through active participation in labour struggles and joining or sympathizing with socialist organizations, particularly the Lebanese Communist party. Equally potent was the internalization of the Palestinian cause, joining its popular protests and party organizations. At the time, Shi'i southerners, like Palestinians, saw themselves positioned outside the state and the loci of power. This was a Shi'i connection to and an experience of the Palestinian 'Karbala', that is, the usurpation of Palestinian rights. It was local, yet universal.³⁵ From their

30. Malek Abisaab, 'A History of Women Tobacco Workers: Labor, Community and Social Transformation in Lebanon, 1895–1992' (Ph.D. dissertation, Binghamton University, 2002), p. 154.

31. Malek Abisaab explains that 'by 1973 the breakup of land ownership due to inheritance and sale created many tiny lots that were insufficient for the subsistence of a rural household (a family of five). Consequently, some peasants sold their lands to work as agricultural labourers while others moved to the city.' Ibid., pp. 170–1.

32. Ibid., pp. 166–7.

33. Ibid., p. 180.

34. Ibid., pp. 166–7.

35. Soon after the dispossession of the Palestinians, Shi'is of the Jabal 'Amil began associating Palestine with Imam Husayn and Zionism with Yazid. See Waddah Chrara,

diverse ideological positions, several Shi'i leaders and party affiliates denounced the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Lebanese land, and the deteriorating labour and health conditions in Shi'i regions.³⁶ But scarce resources and political control over the South led to increased confrontations between the two, even while many Shi'is continued to be associated with Palestinian activism.

The appearance of an anti-status quo organization like Hizballah, therefore, should not be seen merely as a break with earlier forms of Shi'i political activism, for it has an antecedent in a Shi'i-based radicalism that had been earlier expressed in non-sectarian terms. Hizballah used and co-opted central facets of socialist and unionist activism alongside the Palestinian liberation struggle. Amal Saad-Ghorayeb has highlighted Hizballah's pan-Islamic approach to the Palestinian cause and the reference to the Palestinians as 'our people'.³⁷ But the Shi'i link with the Palestinians was not primarily Islamic, but structural, based on the similarities between the Palestinians' statelessness and the poor Shi'is' neglect by the state. The polemical tracts and books that leading Iraqi and Lebanese Shi'i ulema started writing against Marxism in the 1950s point to the potency of communist ideals in Shi'i locales.³⁸ They also point to the direct social and intellectual interaction and exchange between religious and Marxist thought at the very heart of the *hawzas*. The political movement of Imam Musa Sadr in the 1960s built on this development in the political consciousness of Shi'is, who already had a memory of social deprivation and dispossession, which they had articulated in class terms.

Against this background one can understand why remaking religious education in the *hawzas* at the hands of Hizballah became a vehicle for class mobility and political empowerment, not only for displaced southerners but also for Shi'is from the Bekaa.³⁹ In fact, Hizballah's post-1992 accommodation to the Lebanese political system risked being overtaken by the same socio-economic pressures that had

Transformations d'une manifestation religieuse dans un village du Liban-Sud (Ashura) (Beirut: Publications du Centre de Recherches de l'Université Libanaise, Institut des Sciences Sociales, 1968), pp. 100–1.

36. See Augustus R. Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), p. 38.

37. Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizballah*, pp. 72–4.

38. A representative body of this literature is Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, *Falsafatunā* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1969); Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr *Iqtisādunā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1977); Muḥammad Mahdī Shams al-Dīn [Shamseddin], *al-ʿIlmāniyya* (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Islāmī li'l-Dirāsāt wa'l-Abḥāth, 1980); Muḥammad Mahdī Shams al-Dīn [Shamseddin], *Muṭarāhāt fī al-fikr al-maddī wa al-fikr al-dīnī* (Beirut: Dār al-Taʿāruf, 1978).

39. The *hawzas*' appearance in Lebanon also underwrites the suppression, imprisonment and assassination of Najaf's leading scholars and the disruption of its seminaries.

facilitated its emergence in the first place: when Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayli proclaimed a 'revolt of the hungry' (*thawrat al-jiyāʿ*) in his native Brital in the Bekaa in July 1997, thousands of people were ready to follow him. Al-Tufayli hoped that the protest would ignite civil disobedience nationwide in what he termed 'a country of mobs' where 'rulers stole public and private monies'.⁴⁰ The poor of the Bekaa revolted against poverty, poor health conditions, unemployment and government neglect. Even compared with their fellow Shi'is in Jabal ʿAmil, they were the 'forgotten' people because they suffered the double effect of economic depression and political marginalization – their distance from the Israeli border meant that they received neither national attention nor much popular sympathy.

As the above discussion shows, Lebanese Shi'i society (like other Shi'i societies) was not a monolithic entity, passively waiting for the Iranian revolution to happen so as to import Khomeinism. This shows the inadequacy of studies that treat Hizballah as an Iranian 'embryo' and view its activities simply as a fulfilment of Iranian state policy.⁴¹ By the same token, Hizballah's *hawzas* cannot be cast merely as 'channels' serving 'Iranian influence', as is sometimes suggested.⁴²

LEBANON'S HAWZAS

The seminaries of Hizballah, as I will show through data gathered from interviews and periodicals, aim to nurture the 'intellectual' as someone organically tied to the depressed Shi'i classes, and to spread the ideas of the party as effectively as possible. The party of Hizballah has an extensive network of philanthropic, medical and educational organizations. The Emdad Committee for Islamic Charity, established in 1987, declared that its central aim was to alleviate social hardship among those Lebanese most affected by the Israeli occupation of the South.⁴³ Emdad invests its efforts in helping the 'destitute and the needy', especially those who experienced war and displacement. At the same time, Emdad introduces itself as a fundamental aid to postwar society, helping families with social problems such as poverty, divorce or handicaps.⁴⁴ Hizballah's commitment to the development of the rural economy cemented its ties to the countryside. This is evident in its 'income generating programmes', which include cattle farming, beekeeping, carpet weaving

40. 'Mudāhamāt fī l-Biqāʿ laylan - thawrat al-jiyāʿ', *al-Safīr* (5 July 1997): 1–6.

41. An example of this scholarship is Sharāra, *Dawlat Hizb Allāh*, pp. 335–6; and Mats Warn, 'A Voice of Resistance: the Point of View of Hizballah', *al-Mashriq*, 2 April 1998: 6–8. Saad-Ghorayeb accurately showed the inadequacy of Sharara's view that Hizballah's decisions simply mirror shifts in balance of power in Iran. See Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizballah*, pp. 46–7.

42. Sharāra, *Dawlat Hizb Allāh*, p. 7.

43. See website <http://almashriq.hiof-no/Lebanon>

44. Ibid.

and setting up shops. Hizballah aspires to fulfil the welfare needs of 51,000 poor families in Beirut, the South, the Bekaa, the North and Mount Lebanon. All this attests to the importance that Hizballah places on rescuing the rural economy from demise at the same time as it develops projects for employment and housing in the city. Since 1978, Fadlallah instituted through the al-Mabarrat association several philanthropic and charitable programmes to address the needs of orphans and the blind.⁴⁵ Al-Mabarrat provided academic boarding schools, medical care clinics, vocational schools and cultural centres for needy Shi'is. Most Qom graduates returning to Lebanon have taught at some of Fadlallah's establishments and at Iranian institutes like al-Shahid (the Centre for Strategic Studies), which coordinates its activities with Iran's ministry of Islamic guidance.

This sets the Hizballah cleric apart from the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council (SISC) whose head, Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddin, was an ardent supporter of the Lebanese state and stood for unconditional and complete integration of Shi'is in their particular national surrounding, be that the Bahraini, Pakistani or Lebanese state. According to Shamseddin, the ideal Lebanese Shi'i was 'committed to the preservation of order' and obedient to the law, the very core ingredient of citizenship.⁴⁶ When numerous Shi'i industrial workers supported the strike of the General Labour Union and its syndicates against the government in July 1995, Shamseddin denounced it along with other like means of resolving labour grievances. In comparison, 'Ali 'Ammar, the Hizballah deputy and head of the Committee of Loyalty to the Resistance (*kitlat al-wafa' li'l-muqawama*), called on all people to partake in the strike against government attempts to increase taxes, customs duties and the prices of some consumer products.⁴⁷ Hizballah's emphasis on modernizing the *hawzas* seems, in the context of its relationship to the nation-state and its organic intellectuals' relationship to the nation, a means of harnessing techno-economic and financial resources for the service of the excluded classes and regions. Graduates of the *hawzas* want to transcend the boundaries of their community and in fact aspire to play a national role by occupying state positions.

It is unclear when exactly the Hizballah *hawzas* were formed, but the most recent one was founded in 1980–81, that is before the actual emergence of Hizballah as an organized entity. It appears that the *hawzas* were preceded by a number of study circles offering *madrasa*-style education that were loosely affiliated with splinter groups that would later coalesce to form Hizballah. The importance of the Iranian connection for encouraging Lebanese Shi'is to pursue a religious edu-

45. See website www.mabarrat.org.lb

46. Shams al-Din [Shamseddin], 'Al-mashrū' al-shī'i mashrū' al-dawla', *Qaḍāyā al-Uṣbū'*, 19 (11–18 February 1994): 11–12.

47. 'Nuwwāb Ḥizb Allāh wa naqābāt ayyadū al-ittihād al-ummālī wa Shams al-Dīn...', *al-Ḥayāt*, 19 July 1995: 2.

cation becomes clear when we look at the numbers of Lebanese seminarians studying in Iran. Before the Iranian revolution there had been fewer than ten Lebanese students at the Iranian *hawzas* of Qom and Mashhad. After the revolution, this number jumped to 450, but fewer than half of these remained at Qom for ten to twenty years.⁴⁸ In 1990 there were 300 Lebanese students pursuing a religious education in Iran. The graduates of the Iranian seminaries were expected to compete for the exceedingly limited number of positions of *mufti* (deliverer of formal legal opinions) and *qadi* (judges).⁴⁹ The financial strains of absorbing and supporting this large number of students in Iran led the Iranians to introduce several restrictions on age, educational level and aptitude. Consequently, the number of admitted students dropped. Until 1990 the religious authorities in Qom would send a delegation to Beirut to conduct the entrance exams and choose the most qualified students for training in Iran. But after 1990 only students who were connected to or affiliated with Hizballah entered the Qom *hawza*, and only the most qualified among these received stipends. Students who did not qualify for an Iranian stipend could nonetheless draw financial support from Lebanese sources. The two principal providers for Lebanese *hawza* students were Hizballah and Shamseddin, who maintained a wide range of contacts with Iran and functioned within different political contexts.

Not all the *hawzas* formed in the late 1970s gravitated towards Hizballah. The *hawza* known as Ma'had al-Shahid al-Awwal, located in the southern suburbs of Beirut, was founded in 1978 as a direct reaction against the pressure the Ba'athist regime put on the Najaf seminaries. Funded by the SISC and directed by Shamseddin, this *hawza* came to be perceived as 'neutral' and 'apolitical'.⁵⁰ However, it was gradually overshadowed by Hizballah's organizations until shrinking enrolments forced it to close down in 1996.

In the 1960s and 1970s Shamseddin would often lament the disinclination of Lebanese Shi'is to seek a religious education in Najaf or Qom, so at one point he praised the popularity of *hawzawi* learning among the new generation of Lebanese Shi'is, attributing it to the ulema's success in dismantling nationalist and socialist ideologies.⁵¹ But he was wrong about the new seminarians' motivation, for Hiz-

48. Interview with Shaykh Hani Fahs.

49. Interview with Sayyid Hasan al-Amin.

50. Interview with Shaykh Suwaydan. In fact, Shamseddin's *hawza* was far from neutral, but it attempted to preserve (with selective reform) the status quo and the Lebanese state rather than challenge its foundations.

51. Sihām M. Zaytūn, 'al-Ḥawzāt al-ilmīyya fī al-Dāhiya al-Janūbiyya li-madīnat Bayrūt' (MA thesis in educational sociology, Lebanese University, College of Social Sciences, Beirut, 1985), p. 29. Shamseddin's focused denunciation of secularism in general, and Marxism in particular, in his writings reveals the fears of the clergy who witnessed

ballah's supporters emerged not in politically neutral settings, but rather in the very villages and towns that had decades earlier hosted communists, leftists, secular nationalists and advocates of the Palestinian cause.⁵² The rejection of secularism and/or socialism was obviously not enough to attract students to Shamseddin's *hawza*; on the contrary, many of his *hawza* students and graduates defected to Hizballah *hawzas* for intermediate and advanced clerical training. This shows that it was not the conventional or classical theological studies *per se* that seemed in demand at the revived seminaries, but rather the forceful link between religious and politico-economic concerns. Close study of the *hawza* of al-Rasul al-Akram illuminates the ideological elements that shaped the curricula and pedagogical framework of Shi'i religious learning in Lebanon.

A HIZBALLAH HAWZA: AL-RASUL AL-AKRAM

Founded in Beirut in 1983/4 by Lebanese and Iranian scholars and directed by the Iranian scholar Soleiman Akhtari, this *hawza* hosts more than 60 students with ages ranging from 16 to 35. Al-Rasul al-Akram covers four educational levels – *muqaddimat* (Preliminaries I and II), *sutuh* (externals) and *bahth al-kharij* (advanced research). This last – the final stage designated for the fulfilment of *ijtihad* (use of rational methods in legal inference) requirements – is restricted to a

communism take root among popular Shi'i classes during the 1950s and 1960s. See Shams al-Din [Shamseddin], *Muṭārahāt fī al-fikr al-māddī*. He was of course not alone in trying to refute Marxism. Musa Sadr's seminary was offering classes on Marxism (see Chapter 8, p. 192), and in Iran all major figures in the first wave of the Islamic revival wrote works that purported to refute Marxism. See H. E. Chehabi, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1990), pp. 217–18.

52. These elements are reflected in the background of *hawza* male affiliates. It was also evident in the lives of the women and their families studied by Dalāl al-Bizrī, *Akhawāt al-zīl wa al-yaqīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahār, 1996), pp. 38–9, 56, 77, 84. Also based on informal exchange and enquiries to a number of Shi'i communists and ex-communists during 1986 and 1987, some complained to me about the affiliation of their young relatives with Hizballah against the parents' will. Suffice it to mention one example. M. Halawih, a member of the Lebanese Communist party, discussed his struggle with his sister over her secretive association with Hizballah students at the Lebanese University. His sister had moved from a village in the South to Beirut to stay with him and attend the Lebanese University. He offered her financial and social support but asked her to take off the veil and long dress she had donned after embracing Hizballah's ideals. She pretended to do so, but when he went to seek her at the university without prior notice, he found her fully covered and veiled in the company of other female Hizballah students.

few outstanding students. In practice, however, students still need to travel to Qom after completing their *sutuh* in Lebanon to pursue advanced studies.

As a rule a student must have a high school diploma to be admitted to the seminary, but in practice the *hawza* administration sometimes lets personal traits like trustworthiness override the level/age qualification. Like the application, the entrance exam is intended to scrutinize the political background and psychosocial make-up of incoming students and assesses their receptiveness to religious revivalism and to the ideals of the Iranian revolution. Although al-Rasul al-Akram states that parental approval is essential for the student's admission, this condition is not always upheld. Shaykh Ibrahim Suwaydan, an advanced student and instructor at al-Rasul al-Akram, was initially admitted against his parents' wishes.⁵³

Normally, students are responsible for their expenses at the seminary. Students in boarding school – which is obligatory for Preliminaries I – are offered stipends, but draw additional financial support from their families who (if supportive of their children's affiliation with the *hawza*) are expected to defray their food expenses. Most of the time, however, students receive social and economic aid from Hizballah's associations. The *hawza* of al-Rasul al-Akram also receives aid from Fadlallah and gifts from a number of *maraji*.

At the Preliminaries II stage, students are allowed to work in jobs that conform to their religious and educational orientation at mosques, Islamic cultural organizations and publicly or collectively owned supermarkets. They are also encouraged to teach and conduct *tabligh*, which in this context means the dissemination of Hizballah's ideology. It is in this capacity that the *hawza* becomes an organ for the party's organic intellectuals to spread their views and guarantee continuity of thought. In terms of lifestyle and social temperament, the *hawza* emphasizes austerity and discourages affluence.

The questions directed to potential *hawza* students in the application form disclose Hizballah's political and organizational traits. Applicants have to explain why they chose to devote themselves to a religious educational discipline, whether they have been previously involved in Islamic or non-Islamic organizations, whether they belong to a social or political organization, and whether they attend social festivities or conventions and, if so, which ones.⁵⁴ Students have to note whether a cleric can be found in their family or village and to describe their relationship to him. To discern the students' general tendencies, the *hawza*'s educational board also asks applicants to identify a historical figure they admire and the types of books they read and take an interest in. Two of the most significant questions asked are: 'How do you envisage the form of Islamic activity during [the

53. Interview with Shaykh Ibrahim Suwaydan.

54. Zaytūn, 'al-Ḥawzāt al-ʿilmiyya', p. 122.

Twelfth Imam's] Occultation?' and 'Do you have a talent for public speaking?', suggesting a direct connection between *hawza* learning, oratory skills/proselytizing and political mobilization. Three months after their initial admission to the *hawza*, students prepare for another examination in which their conduct and commitment to the internal discipline of the *hawza* are assessed. If his performance is unsatisfactory, they are dismissed from the *hawza*.⁵⁵

The *hawza*'s executive committee is composed of six or seven religious shaykhs who oversee its curriculum development. The official religious establishment of Iran supervised the seminary through the Lebanon office of the *vali-ye faqih* (Iran's supreme leader), Seyyed Ali Khameneh'i, but extends considerable autonomy in procedure and execution of the general guidelines to the executive committee of the Lebanese *hawza*. The latter consists of a few Lebanese administrators cum scholars and an Iranian scholar, Shaykh Hamad Isma'il Khaleq. Operating at a lower rank is the general director of the *hawza*, who is also a member of the executive committee.

The unique historical links between Syrian Jabal 'Amil and Safavid Iran are present in the minds of the officials of al-Rasul al-Akram. As is well known, the first Safavid monarch, Shah Isma'il (ruled 1501–24) had invited scholars from Arab regions in general and Jabal 'Amil in particular to spread a standardized version of Twelver Shi'ism in Iran⁵⁶ and, four centuries later, hundreds of 'Amilis started to appropriate the ideals of the Iranian revolution, calling on Iranian religious scholars to offer their expertise and guidance to the newly emerging Lebanese *hawzas*. Several Iranian *mujtahids* travelled to teach at Lebanon's religious circles and seminaries and train its instructors. The Iranians and Hizballah extend economic benefits and privileges to them and their families, which allow them to dispense with other jobs and sources of income.⁵⁷

55. Ibid., p. 42.

56. See Rula Abisaab, 'The 'Ulama of Jabal 'Amil in Safavid Iran, 1501–1736: Marginality, Migration and Social Change', *Iranian Studies*, 27:1–4 (1994) and Chapter 3 in this book.

57. In the early twenty-first century a number of colloquia and conferences were held by administrative directors and educational advisors for Hizballah's *hawzas*. Suffice it to mention the first conference of the *hawza* of al-Imam al-Sadiq, titled 'al-Dirāsāt al-dīniyya fī'l-ma'āhid al-shī'iyya, manāhij wa ishkāliyyāt', held in Sidon in July 2002. See also 'Mu'tamar al-dirāsāt al-dīniyya fī'l-ma'āhid al-shī'iyya', *al-Nahār*, 'Madaniyyāt wa Tarbiyyāt', 15 July 2002, pp. 1–3. The presentations of 'Abdullah Fadlallah, the director of the *hawza* of al-Thaqalayn and others showed the complex dimensions of the internal conflicts, and national and international configurations of *hawzawi* learning and what they mean in the twenty-first century. In the light of this new material, I hope to expand and develop aspects of this chapter in future studies.

Unlike Beirut, Qom provides its students and *mujtahids*-to-be with a cohesive and homogeneous social environment, despite a measure of theological and political diversity. By comparison with seminarians in Qom, which is self-sufficient as a city of religious education and clerical training, the material demands facing the Lebanese students of religion in Beirut are much greater.⁵⁸ This means that the *hawza* student in Beirut is forced to work most of the time outside the seminary's domain and vicinity. As for teaching style, the relationship of the teacher to his students in Qom does not end with the delivery of lessons in class. The shaykh lives close to his students, mingles with them and becomes a forceful figure in their lives, emerging as a lifetime mentor and paternal figure. In comparison, Beirut is socially and politically heterogeneous and hosts varied lifestyles that are distinguished by differing dress codes and ways of behaving. The increased number of Hizballah affiliates and sympathizers in Beirut in the 1990s has brought greater political homogeneity to the southern suburbs among those pursuing religious learning. This is not only true of men, for al-Dahiya has become a source of personal and social identity to several women affiliates of Hizballah's seminaries as well.⁵⁹ Al-Dahiya does not simply stand as a symbol for Islamist resistance, but more importantly it has become a symbol of Shi'i deprivation and discrimination caused by conscious state neglect and marginalization. The social ties among Hizballah's Islamists have grown also from their shared dislike of the privileged secular bourgeoisie that views al-Dahiya with disdain.⁶⁰

In a conscious attempt to blend more easily into the secular and Western sectors of society, Beirut's male seminarians do not adopt a special dress code. Shaykh Suwaydan, for instance, taught religious courses at both the *hawzas* and the secular Lebanese University. He eschewed religious garb and conformed to the dominant secular dress code. Dr al-Haj Hasan, director of the Educational Bureau of Hizballah, refuted a widespread belief that the *hawzas* produce specialized jurists who can be distinguished by their appearance and mannerisms, giving the example of numerous unturbaned ulema who carry out their clerical duties methodically.⁶¹ Hizballah's promotion of a general, undifferentiated image for the jurist was a powerful indication of its need to find, first, a wider nation-based language and, second, to maintain a 'modern' posture. It may seem at first glance that Hizballah's emphasis on promoting *hawzawi* learning disassociates the party from other Shi'i and national secular constituencies. Indeed, the Lebanese state with its secular foundation rejects *hawza* credentials categorically in job employment or pro-

58. Interview with Dr Husayn al-Haj Hasan.

59. Al-Bizrī, *Akhawāt al-zil*, pp. 130–1.

60. This knowledge was derived from participant observation and knowledge of the popular culture of the southern suburbs of Beirut.

61. Interview with Dr Husayn al-Haj Hasan.

fessional recognition. But in reality Hizballah's validation of religious learning provides alternatives to those positioned below in society and outside the state's power lines. Consequently, it becomes a rubric for national engagement between the Shi'is and the state. *Hawzawi* education emerged out of autonomous Shi'i traditions outside state jurisdiction or regulation. Hizballah's attempt to activate these traditions, particularly in an era of state weakness, empowered alternative forms of national identity; in other words, Hizballah's political directives spoke like the state, partaking in the negotiation of Lebanese citizenship for Shi'is. As Hind, a Lebanese woman who studied for two years at one of Hizballah's *hawzas*, put it: 'Why do we need the state? We Shi'is can, through *khums*, build a state within the state, an authority within the authority.'⁶²

The politics of attire and public space at the *hawza* have a significant gendered manifestation. On the one hand the male seminarian crosses spaces of party, sect and locale more easily than women, who demarcate these spaces instantly through special dress and bodily demeanour. This was true even in the 1970s among the few women who started to appear in public with the full *hijab* or Iranian *chador* (as opposed to the thin simple *mandil*, which is a long scarf) and who became the centre of public spectacle and wonder.⁶³ The *hawza* women of Hizballah seem to set the rules of engagement with outsiders from the start. They have an assertive approach to mainstream urban attire and the secularized men and women who prefer Western garb, be they Muslim or Christian. Despite this new assertiveness, the dominant view remains among Hizballah members and leaders that top decision-making and executive state and party posts should devolve to men rather than women. These men in turn find the need to transport themselves more easily to diverse and nationally contested spaces, since they are trying to achieve a position of dominance. The women of Hizballah do not assign themselves this task and seem to set their political space apart and privatize it at first encounter.

CURRICULUM OF STUDY

When first founded in the 1970s, Lebanese *hawzas* did not attempt to coordinate the activities of their directors and funders, who resisted the idea of a unified or standardized policy for all.⁶⁴ But now, unlike seminaries in Iraq and Iran, the study programme at Hizballah's *hawzas* is standardized and students cannot choose their courses freely. The curriculum reflects the party's ideology, whereas seminarians

62. See al-Bizri, *Akhawāt al-zil*, p. 124.

63. Ibid., p. 167. For an in-depth study of gender, Shi'i Islamism and modernity, see Lara Deeb, 'An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety among Islamist Shi'i Muslims in Beirut' (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 2003).

64. Sihām M. Zaytūn, 'al-Ḥawzāt al-ʿilmiyya', p. 45.

in Najaf or Qom have a choice of classes teaching varying approaches and schools of thought. Study progress is measured by the number of books covered rather than by the completion of courses. As mentioned earlier, four phases of education are distinguished, namely *al-muqaddimat al-ula* (Preliminaries I), *al-muqaddimat al-thaniya* (Preliminaries II), *sutuh* (externals) and *al-baḥth al-kharij* (advanced research). The number of years needed to graduate at each of these stages largely depends on the combined efforts of the student and his or her mentor.

The material to be mastered at each level is roughly the same as in the theological centres of Najaf and Qom, with a few peculiarities. At the level of Preliminaries I (three to four years) students are also instructed in Persian and English. At the level of Preliminaries II (three years), textbooks are used that emphasize the *Usuli* (rationalist) perspective as opposed to the *Akhbari* (traditionalist) perspective even more than in Iraq and Iran. The former, which became dominant among Twelver Shi'is in the eighteenth century,⁶⁵ stresses *ijtihad*, the continuous renewal and adaptation of legal edicts to reflect changing circumstances. The Lebanese *hawzas*' emphasis on the *Usuli* notion of *ijtihad* also serves a domestic purpose. Hizballah's theologians consider it a powerful and necessary tool for modernizing Islamic society. Sayyid Fadlallah's *ijtihad* on the legal status of women and their rights is one example of this process.⁶⁶ The *Usuli* tradition thus confers great religious and social importance to ulema who engage in *ijtihad* and who are referred to as *mujtahids*, as it is they who must guide the community through changing times. The Lebanese *hawzas*' adoption of the perspective is indicative of their intellectual affinity with the Iranian state's interpretation of Shi'ism. Among the *mujtahids* a very small number emerge to serve as individual spiritual guides for the common believers: these are called *marja' al-taqlid* (*marja'-e taqlid* in Persian), which is most commonly translated as 'source of emulation'. The *Usuli* school's emphasis on the role of the ulema as community leaders was carried to its ultimate logical conclusion by Ayatollah Khomeini with the establishment of the Iranian theocracy in 1979,⁶⁷ but in the eyes of most Shi'i ulema the seizure of political power by religious figures carries the logic of the *Usuli* school too far.

65. See Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order, and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginnings to 1890* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), pp. 231–7; and Juan Cole, 'Shi'i Clerics in Iraq and Iran 1722–1780: The Akhbari–Usuli Controversy Reconsidered', *Iranian Studies*, 18:1 (1985): 3–34.

66. Aziz, 'Fadlallah and the Remaking of the *Marja'iyya*', in Walbridge, ed., *The Most Learned of the Shi'a*, pp. 208–11.

67. Said Amir Arjomand, 'Revolution in Shi'ism', in William R. Roff, ed., *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning: Comparative Studies of Muslim Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 111–31.

At the Preliminaries II level seminarians have to choose a *marja'*. The towering two *marja'*s of the 1980s were Ayatollah Abulqasim Khu'i (who died in 1992) and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (who died in 1989). The former rejected theocracy and was largely ignored (or criticized indirectly) by the authorities of the Islamic Republic, despite the great prestige he had among believers on account of his superior learning.⁶⁸ If students were born during the lifetime of either Khomeini or Khu'i, they are permitted to continue to imitate one of them: the fact that Hizballah acknowledges Ayatollah Khu'i bespeaks the limits of official Iranian influence. But students born after the two *marja'*s' deaths have to imitate new *marja'*s who follow the general political beliefs of Khomeini, that is sympathetic to the concept of an Islamic republic or at least to a close fusion of religion and politics.

At the third, *sutuh*, level, Lebanese *hawza* students spend four years of study and training as opposed to the six-year requirement at Najaf and Qom. It is at this level that they familiarize themselves more thoroughly with their chosen *marja'*s juridical stance on broader questions. The qualified graduates of this level end up as instructors at the first and second levels.

The fourth and highest level of study, *al-bahth al-kharij*, takes between ten and fifteen years, after which one may attain the rank of a *mujtahid*. There is no guarantee, however, and one may have spent 15 years of study and still fall short of *ijtihad*. Traditionally, this final phase of clerical training has been pursued only in Najaf or Qom, but now four Lebanese *hawzas* offer *al-bahth al-kharij*, including al-Rasul al-Akram. It is noteworthy that most of the latter's students are not encouraged to continue to this final level of study. In Lebanon, seminary leaders encourage the production of low-ranking clerics-proselytes servicing a few leading *marja'*s. Few Hizballah students actually pursue advanced study at Qom: they comprised 15 to 20 per cent of the total number of Lebanese students travelling to Iran for *al-bahth al-kharij* in the 1980s and early 1990s.⁶⁹ Clearly, Hizballah brought more structure, discipline and hierarchy to the *hawzas* with the aim of controlling the number of those who rise to the top on the basis of social demand and the overall benefit to Shi'i society. Moreover, the increased competition over Hizballah's scholarly funds for travel and living expenses in Qom places further restrictions on advanced clerical training. But those who are ambitious enough to aspire to the highest ranks of the scholarly hierarchy still must go to Iran and Iraq, the availability of some *bahth al-kharij* in Lebanon itself notwithstanding. In fact, in the eyes of conventional Shi'i scholars and descendants of 'Amili learned

68. For more on the place of these two (and other) sources of emulation in the religious life of Lebanese Shi'is, see Chapter 12, pp. 298-301.

69. Zaytun, 'al-Hawzat al-'ilmiyya', p. 58; Interview with A. N.

families, the Lebanese *hawzas* were but a shabby substitute for the seminaries of Najaf and Qom with their standards of scholarly excellence.⁷⁰

PEDAGOGY AND IDEOLOGY

In a classroom at al-Rasul al-Akram students sit on the floor in a half circle facing their instructor. In a close textual analysis of legal and linguistic works, an explanation (*sharh*) is applied to the text (*matn*) sentence by sentence. The instructor does not use the board at all, emphasizing oral comprehension. During the first phase of his training, the student integrates course material with little discussion or debate. But once the student has reached the final level, the instructor solicits student input and encourages discussion of legal and doctrinal questions or whole texts, orally and in writing.

There are new features in the Lebanese *hawza* too, which reflect the need for objective and quantifiable evaluations that can better serve the overall social and political goals of Hizballah. There are monthly, mid-year and end-of-year examinations. The basis for evaluation and marking vary from one *hawza* to another. Exams conducted on a weekly basis are oral and those conducted on a monthly basis are written. The monthly marks are assessed along with other components of the student's performance, such as the student's relationship with his or her shaykh, or ethical conduct and comportment *vis-à-vis* other students. The superiors will ask a student with an unsuitable personality, or one who has failed to internalize the *hawza*'s ideals, to leave the seminary. The criteria for suitability can be gleaned from observations made by seminarians themselves: they include the failure to commit to Hizballah's worldview, to abide by the internal discipline of the *hawza*, or consistently to express religious beliefs and practices. As such the *hawza* aims to become a life-encompassing experience, causing a transformation that is at once personal and public. In contrast to non-Hizballah *hawzas* like the SISC's *hawza* of al-Shahid al-Awwal, which devoted little if any time to political studies and thus nurtured no particular political vision, al-Rasul al-Akram's inculcates students with Khomeini's methodology and politico-religious testament and Hizballah's political conceptions.⁷¹

As students move ahead with their *hawza* studies, they are expected to develop two additional areas of expertise. The first is the ability to influence people, thus qualifying them to become a *da'iya* (proselyte); the second is *ijtihad* (widely understood). In the first there is an emphasis on general education, effective styles

70. Interview with Sayyid Hasan al-Amin and Sayyid Muhammad al-Amin. I thank Mr Ghassan 'Abdu for his valuable efforts in arranging an interview with Sayyid Muhammad al-Amin in Sidon, 1993.

71. Interview with Shaykh Suwaydan.

of public speech, command of the language and mobilization skills. Likewise, effective methods of teaching and transmitting knowledge are pertinent for successful proselytization (*tabligh*). Although far from being *mujtahids*, *hawza* students assume the title of *fadilat al-shaykh* (his excellency the shaykh) immediately after graduating from Preliminaries I, which means they become legally and socially recognized as a person 'of religion' and take on basic clerical functions despite not having attained a high rank.⁷²

The call for more *tabligh* had the support of both of Lebanon's Shi'i leaders of the 1990s. Sayyid Fadlallah envisaged a new image for the *hawza* and insisted that it had suffered from not including in its curriculum the subject of 'methods of proselytizing', which formed the core of the training of *al-faqih*, *al-da'iya*, *al-muballigh* (the jurist-proselyte-propagandist).⁷³ Pertinent to the radicalization of *hawzawi* learning and its socio-political implications for Lebanese Shi'is was the convening of the First Conference on Religious Proselytizing in 1996, which was in fact (but not explicitly) convened as a reaction against the new spirit of *tabligh*. Supported by Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddin, the conference hosted more traditional scholars who questioned the propagandist features of Hizballah's *hawzas*.⁷⁴ Shamseddin declared that the proselyte must be objective and uncommitted to any political framework, thus serving 'all' and 'nurturing everyone'.⁷⁵ His advocacy of a non-political style can be read as an admission that all too many Shi'i youth were finding more meaning in Hizballah's form of political *tabligh*. One can conclude, then, that in the wake of a new socio-political reality, the Hizballah cleric becomes an 'organic' missionary-intellectual.

THE WOMEN'S SEMINARY: AL-SAYYIDA AL-ZAHRA

Unlike the SISC's Ma'had al-Shahid al-Awwal, Hizballah's *hawzas* have women's branches. That of al-Rasul al-Akram is called Hawzat al-Sayyida al-Zahra, and is located less than five kilometres from the men's branch.⁷⁶

According to the woman supervisor of al-Sayyida al-Zahra, there are two

72. Ibid.

73. Salim al-Hasani, *al-Ma'alim al-jadida li'l-marja'iyya al-shi'iyya: dirasa wa hiwar ma'a Ayat Allah Muhammad Husayn Faql Allah* (Beirut: Dar al-Malak, 1414H/1994), p. 91.

74. See Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din [Shamseddin], 'Wazifat al-tabligh al-dini', *al-Irfan*, 80 (March and April 1996): 143-7; Muhammad Hasan al-Amin, 'al-Muballigh wa al-Sulfa', *ibid.*: 155-61; Muhammad Kazim Makkī, 'Dawr al-Tabligh fi al-Mu'assasat al-tarbawiyya', *ibid.*: 176-8; 'Ali al-Khatib, 'Shakhshiyyat al-muballigh wa Sulukuh', *ibid.*: 187-90.

75. Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din [Shamseddin], 'Khitab samahat', *al-Irfan*, 80 (March and April 1996): 197.

76. Interview with Hala Suwaydan, spouse of Shaykh Ibrahim Suwaydan.

central motivations behind a *hawza* education for women. The first is to illuminate the duties, rights and social obligations of Shi'i women on the basis of the Twelver Shi'i school of law.⁷⁷ She gave the example of veiling, explaining that women come to understand that veiling is just and legally binding. The second reason for *hawza* education is tied to the political mobilization of women by the revolutionary ulema of Iran.⁷⁸ As the example of Iran showed, to bring about fundamental change in society it is imperative to involve the entire population, and that means women as well. The members of the educational board of Hawzat al-Sayyida al-Zahra argue that women are indispensable for propagating the revolution and strengthening its foundations. They also believe that gender diversity is essential for the modernization of the seminaries. Their rhetoric of modernization thus necessitates female partnership and input. More importantly, this rhetoric is also about Islamic state formation. Shaykh Suwaydan found that the absence of women in the Amal party was symptomatic of its disinclination to establish a Shi'i state. In contrast, Hizballah devoted special attention to the recruitment of women into the party and addressed the gender imbalance in Shi'i political institutions.⁷⁹

To be admitted to the *hawza*, a woman in principle needs to obtain the agreement of her guardian (father, husband or fiancé), but in some circumstances a supportive relative can override the parents' objection to their daughter's entry into the seminary. Furthermore, a trustworthy person must testify to her uprightness and moral conduct. To accommodate the needs of married women, classes are often held in the afternoons and evenings, and al-Sayyida al-Zahra provides a nursery for its three (out of 20) married students.⁸⁰ In the late 1980s, most of the women who entered the *hawza* had a modest to poor educational background; they were nevertheless encouraged to pursue academic degrees at the Lebanese University in addition to *hawza*. Women acquire a general knowledge in Arabic grammar, doctrine, selected legal issues (*masa'il*), Koranic exegesis and political orientation. Their curriculum differs most from that of the men in that advanced legal studies are not open to them, even though a woman can in theory attain the rank of *mujtahida* (but not that of *marja'*). At higher educational levels, the classes contain four or five women at the most.⁸¹ As for teaching staff, in the 1980s most of the instructors were men, but by the end of the twentieth century it seemed that several Hizballah women were assuming teaching positions at the women's *hawzas*.

The rhetorical commitment to women's advancement notwithstanding, actual possibilities for women to achieve leadership positions are limited. Women can

77. Zaytun, 'al-Hawzat al-'ilmiyya', p. 69.

78. Interview with A. N.

79. Interview with Shaykh Suwaydan.

80. Zaytun, 'al-Hawzat al-'ilmiyya', pp. 70-1.

81. Interview with Hala Suwaydan and Y. M.

pursue leadership roles in Hizballah's missions and deliver public speeches at mosques, but although many *hawza* women emphasize the principle of equality and the essential role of women in political awakening and cultural change, they consider it unnecessary to occupy the highest ranks of the party or of Hizballah's social institutions.⁸² It is significant, however, that most of them dismiss or denigrate female wage labour. (Incongruously, they do not consider their activities on behalf of Hizballah a form of wage labour.) Like numerous Islamists around the world, Hizballah's women promote feminist interpretations of the scriptures and the traditions of the Prophet and the imams. Even though most *hawza* women feel it is biologically and socially natural for men to rise to the highest clerical and political ranks, they contest (in a way not always foreseeable by Hizballah's male leadership) male dominance and aim to empower themselves, not through dismissal of the foundational scriptures but through their reinterpretation. The *hawza*'s success in regulating the lives of Shi'i women seems a yardstick for measuring the validity of Islam as a religion *vis-à-vis* the West. Hizballah's negotiation of women's status and position in Islamic society is ostensibly a negotiation of power relations between an abstract unified Islam and an abstract American West and its hegemonic facets.

DIFFERENT VIEWS OF NEW HAWZAS

Hawza students often identify two major political trends among Lebanese Shi'is.⁸³ Hizballah reflects the first and Amal the second. As Shaykh Ibrahim Suwaydan, an advanced student, explained, 'Hizballah is similar to communism', for it possesses a core dogma and a strategic goal with a long-term futuristic scope. In contradistinction, he notes, Amal seeks temporary goals, which explains its shifting loyalties and objectives and lack of a revolutionary vision for changing historical reality. Shaykh Suwaydan believes that *hawza* education and Shi'i protest against oppression are interconnected and feed into each other. The *hawza* embodies a commitment to a revolutionary, universal and purposeful vision of history. He invoked an unambiguous narrative of the Shi'i past, a past marked by usurpation of Shi'i rights and dispossession. 'Everyone fought the Shi'a, their sayyids and scholars,' he observed.⁸⁴ Like other Hizballah *hawza* students, Suwaydan understands uniform history as a comprehensive struggle against injustice, be it at the hands of the Lebanese secular state, Israeli occupation or US imperialism. In its civil and militant actions Hizballah is like the Palestinian intifada, firmly rooted in

82. Al-Bizri, *Akhawāt al-zil*, pp. 92–6, 97–111.

83. Interview with Shaykh Suwaydan.

84. Ibid.

local traditions and, to use the words of Hardt and Negri, it 'leaps immediately to the global level and attacks the imperial constitution in its generality'.⁸⁵

Like most *hawza* students Suwaydan comes from a working-class family. The mainstay of the family's living came from summer construction work. With their father, who was a tile layer at construction sites, Suwaydan and his brothers toiled to earn enough money to survive for the rest of the year. When he reached the fifth intermediary school level he had to pay for his own education through manual labour and later by teaching at local elementary schools.⁸⁶ His parents opposed his entry into the *hawza* but, as he put it, 'I did not waiver in my convictions because I was driven by a great passion to become influential in society.' It is this influence that lies at the source of his admiration for the man of religion.⁸⁷

Shaykh Suwaydan describes how the image of the cleric and his role changed in his eyes when the ideas of the Iranian revolution impregnated the milieu of South Lebanon (Jabal 'Amil). He began to question the practices of those *maraji'* who devoted themselves exclusively to teaching and writing, retreating from society into a world of legal compendia and abstract formulations. Suwaydan argues that Shi'is need a pious but visible figure to impart knowledge of doctrine and religious ritual rather than a theorizing *mujtahid*, implying that the populace is better served by a committed *da'iya* whose interests are organically tied to those of the common person. Hizballah students are this new breed of *da'iyas*. They bear little resemblance to the older generation of Najafi and Qomi graduates, who were (ideally) submerged in pure jurisprudential and legal discussions.

Like other descendants of established ulema families, Sayyid Hasan al-Amin contests Hizballah *hawzas'* claims to true clerical training. He stresses the dilemma created by the twofold process of *madrassa* reappearance and the impetus for travel to Iran, complaining that the number of graduates returning from Iran exceeds the country's demand.⁸⁸ If by demand he meant the official posts of judges and clerics, Sayyid al-Amin is correct, but a demand was in fact created for a depressed class to advance its own scholarly prototypes and carve for itself professional posts independent of government funding.

In retrospect, an ambitious Islamic revolution and a proclaimed sovereignty for the jurist, as institutionalized in Iran under the term *velayat-e faqih*, have separated the Hizballah initiate forever from the pre-modern clerical world. By way of emphasizing the interconnectedness of knowledge and political change, the new class of jurists has been trying to confront modernity rather than escape from it. Hizballah seems to be laying claims to the discourse of modernity, selecting and

85. Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 56.

86. In spring 1993 he was studying philosophy at the Lebanese University.

87. Interview with Shaykh Suwaydan.

88. Interview with Sayyid Hasan al-Amin.

investing new notions in it. It suggests that there are multiple arrivals and enactments of modernity outside the West, the Islamist being in Hizballah's view as legitimate as the Western one – if not more so. As such, the special attention Hizballah affords to modernity functions as a post-colonial, anti-systemic or anti-empire commentary on power relations. For this reason, Hizballah's language is not always translatable or coherent, for it is struggling with a number of pathways into the history of the global postmodern. Locally, however, Hizballah's organic intellectuals, who provide a spiritual basis for the party's social and economic projects, are an undeniable source of empowerment for Lebanese Shi'is. Through the notion of *ijtihad*, Hizballah supporters expect to renew social regulations endlessly and by doing so modernize their societies for the benefit of the disadvantaged. Yet, to succeed fully in this task, the party has to enter the body of the state. But this would be the topic of another study.

In the early twenty-first century, Hizballah's women instructors at the *hawza* held degrees in chemistry, psychology, political science, education, English literature and biology, albeit from the Lebanese University.⁸⁹ The *hawza* encouraged academic university-style education and went so far as to cancel a class at the *hawza* if its schedule conflicted with a university course. Dr Husayn al-Haj Hasan, the director of Hizballah's Educational Bureau, who holds a degree in engineering from a modern college, explained that instead of rejecting Western literature and languages, the *hawza* must teach them from its own perspective. Thus Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* is taught to instruct students about the moral decadence and human depravation of the West. The constructed narrative about Islam as separate from and irreconcilable with the West is one that aims to empower its holders and make it more difficult for the American West to enjoy its hegemonic posture. But Hizballah's vision harkens, quite unconsciously, on the Orientalist perception of Islam as suitable for the East and alien to the developed West. Orientalists, as Husayn Muroeh noted, presented the East as irrational, synthetic and sensual and the West as logical and commanding. Hizballah seems to have challenged the attributes of these dichotomies but not the dichotomies themselves.⁹⁰ As such, Hizballah risks making a complex and ambiguous world of fluid exchange regimented and unreal.

89. See al-Bizri, *Akhawāt al-zil*, pp. 73–8.

90. Husayn Murruwa [Muroeh], *al-Naza'āt al-māddiyya fī al-falsafa al-ʿarabiyya al-islāmiyya*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Fārābī, 1988), pp. 111–14, 123. For Muroeh, the same flaws of the Eurocentric school of philosophy are inversely echoed in the Afro-Asian school of philosophy that overstated the contribution of the Afro-Asian culture against the European. Ibid., p. 124.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Hizballah *hawzas* in Lebanon found their justification in the incremental and diverse historical changes experienced by Shi'is from the 1950s to the 1980s. During the 1960s rapid demographic growth among Shi'i populations and the failure of the state's economic policies in the countryside (especially the Bekaa and the South) led to increased rural–urban migration. In addition to these factors, the growth of a Palestinian resistance movement in the South and the incessant Israeli attacks on Shi'i villages and towns destabilized and impoverished a large sector of this population. A close look at the Beirut suburbs of Burj Hammud and Nab'a in the 1970s reveals the concentration of Bekaa families from Baalbek and Hermel, and ʿAmili families from al-ʿArqub, al-Khiyam, al-Tiba, Bint Jubayl, al-Zahrani, Nabatiyya and other villages from Jabal ʿAmil.⁹¹ The Shi'i population of Beirut itself increased dramatically and experienced the frustrations and disappointments of an expanding urban working class. The civil war (1975–91) furthered the displacement of Shi'is, a process whose beginnings coincided with Musa Sadr's efforts to organize Shi'is along sectarian lines. In the suburbs of Beirut, and in the absence of state support, Hizballah offered Shi'is free schooling for children, interest-free loans for house construction, affordable health care, hospitalization and other social benefits.

In its historical evolution, the Lebanese Hizballah drew upon class struggles, anti-state protest and the Palestinian liberation movement, all of which resonated with the language of Khomeini's revolution against Western imperialism. I have argued that Hizballah's seminaries reflect a struggle with both the past colonial and current imperial 'West' over the ownership of modernity, aiming to provide an alternative to the latter's civilizational secular traits and to its global postmodern projects. The positive value assigned by *hawza* directors to modernization may well remain a derivative discourse that fails to break away from Western modernity. Yet, as the organic intellectuals strive to avert crisis, and as they embrace techno-economic growth and financial development that benefit lower class Shi'is, they empower and validate this discourse locally and nationally.

It is hardly surprising that during the 1970s and 1980s the *hawzas* of Beirut absorbed students from working-class families who had a poor school education or were school dropouts. The *hawzas* not only offered them a modest stipend, but also allowed them some form of status reversal, moving from marginality to social recognition within a well-defined political niche. The encroachment of the new *hawza* graduates, the 'organic intellectuals', on the domain of the traditional scholastic elite became a source of discomfort for the latter. Tensions emerged between the high-ranking, salaried *qadis* (judges) and *muftis* on the one hand and low-

91. Sharāra, *Dawlat Hizb Allāh*, pp. 74–5.

ranking shaykhs on the other, as the latter became a social force to reckon with. The new clerical posts created by the *hawzas* assumed missionary socio-religious duties carried out in rural locales and depressed urban neighbourhoods.⁹² By discouraging students from pursuing *ijtihad*, the *hawzas* were producing a large number of low-ranking religious functionaries for local demand. The energies of *hawza* graduates were invested in public and social work as local community clerics, teachers and proselytes of Hizballah. The latter's seminarians were committed to the idea of organic ulema being public activists. The ulema of the good old *madrassa* system denounced this development, accusing Hizballah of turning students into money collectors.⁹³

The success of the Iranian revolution in wresting control of the state from the old established elite triggered heated discussions and debates among Lebanese thinkers and political leaders from the right to the left. A politburo member of the Lebanese Communist party, Karim Muroeh, called on leftists in the Arab world to explore the 'revolutionary potential' of Islamism. It was a time of crisis. Socialists felt inept in directing the struggle in Lebanon on a class basis during the 1980s. Karim Muroeh, the descendant of a prominent Shi'i scholastic family, wondered whether communists had not erred in their denunciation of Islamism. In other words, he tried to understand how so many Shi'is whose uncles and aunts had been members and friends of the communists two decades earlier had turned to Hizballah. He was probably unaware that they had done so in lieu of, rather than despite, the previous generation's socialist ideals.⁹⁴

92. Interviews with Sayyids Hasan and Muhammad al-Amin.

93. Ibid.

94. I researched the Shi'i seminaries in Lebanon during 1993 and 1994 and conducted a series of interviews with Shi'i scholars, religious students and community leaders. I have listed the names of my sources except for two who wanted to remain anonymous and whom I refer to as A. N and Y. M.

11

Hizballah's Public and Social Services and Iran

Judith Harik

In this chapter we examine the development and political implications of the para-legal public and social services that were developed from the 1980s onwards by Lebanon's Shi'i party, Hizballah, with some financial backing from the Islamic Republic of Iran. These services have been vital to the morale of the resistance forces fielded by Hizballah to fight the Israelis and their surrogates in south Lebanon and have won the Party of God votes in parliamentary and municipal elections in the 1990s and 2000s. Since it can be argued that these services are at least partially responsible for the party's capacity to wage militant *jihād* in the South and political *jihād* in the national arena, and since it is doubtful that the scope, durability and expansion of these programmes could have been achieved without Iranian assistance, the subject bears investigation within the scope of this book. Furthermore, the provision of social services has an impact on the struggle between Hizballah and its rival, the more secular Amal movement, for leadership of the Shi'is, Lebanon's poorest and largest community. The extent and scope of social services of the two organizations may provide some evidence of the seriousness of this competition.

With their government helpless to affect the spiralling violence of the civil war that raged between 1975 and 1989 and incapable of performing normal public services, citizens, caught in the crossfire of conflict, turned for assistance to those who controlled their areas – the armed fighters of local parties.¹ Snyder and Harik have analysed the organization and socio-political impact of the social and public services managed by the Christian Lebanese Forces and the Druze Progressive

1. The Lebanese state's failure to maintain adequate services is well analysed in Randa Antūn, *al-Ḥarb wa l'idāra al-lubnāniyya* (Beirut: Dār al-fikr li-l'abḥāth wa l'nashr, 1990).

Socialist Party, which established what some observers called 'sectarian cantons' in their areas.² My 1993 comparative study on this subject included the above parties as well as Hizballah.³ In this chapter I flesh out and update information on the Shi'i component of that study with emphasis on Hizballah.

FACTORS BEHIND THE RISE OF SURROGATE PUBLIC AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Besides the wartime imperative, the factors involved in Lebanese parties assuming public functions that normally devolve on the state include situational features such as the geo-strategic location of areas to be administered, size of locale, and the material resources already in place and exploitable. The size and cohesiveness of the included population and the quality and extent of human resources that could be mobilized to direct and staff surrogate administrative institutions were also important. The extent to which public services develop depends on the interplay of the above factors with purposive variables such as the goals pursued by elites with regard to the reform or transformation of the Lebanese state. To the extent that such agendas coincide with those of regional powers, a party's services may receive substantial outside support. The type, size and duration of this support naturally have an important bearing on the depth and scope of the social and public services that can be offered.

Organizational momentum – the tendency of bureaucrats to expand the activities of their agencies beyond those for which they were originally conceived – is another factor in organizational development. This occurs as a response to public demand and as a result of the ideological and strategic needs of the political elites. Taken together, these variables have an important bearing on a party's potential to undertake and sustain, under conditions of social conflict, the broad social services normally carried out by government departments. To what extent can these factors explain the initiation, development and political importance of Hizballah's public and social services?

GEO-POLITICS AND COMMUNITY POWER

The extent to which Lebanon's sectarian enclaves were compact, defensible and

2. N. Kliot, *The Territorial Disintegration of a State: The Case of Lebanon*, Occasional Papers Series (Durham: Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1986); Lewis W. Snyder, 'The Lebanese Forces: Their Origins and Role in Lebanon's Politics', *Middle East Journal*, 38:1 (Winter 1984); Judith P. Harik, 'Change and Continuity in the Lebanese Druze Community: The Civil Administration of the Mountains, 1983–1990', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 29:3 (July 1993): 377–99.
3. Judith Harik, *The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias* (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1994).

under uniform control, and the availability of human and physical resources, set important limits on what the warring militias could achieve in the realm of public administration and social assistance. Lebanon's settlement pattern, whereby distinctive ethnic groups concentrated in various areas to form the territorial basis of a mosaic society, encouraged uneven political development. Possessing particular identities, loyalties, and with different resources to exploit, each group evolved along its own lines and at its own pace. In this respect the Druze and Maronite communities developed group consciousness and were politically mobilized more than a century before this phenomenon occurred among the Lebanese Shi'is.⁴ Furthermore, the Maronites especially benefited from the fact that the area where they were most numerous included the eastern part of Beirut, where development was concentrated. The Shi'i regions, by contrast, far removed from the economic and social advantages of the capital, were severely deprived.⁵ But while the Druze were able to share Maronite assets of an extensive network of parochial schools and several important universities due to the proximity of their respective enclaves,

4. Sami Makarem, *The Druze Faith* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1974); and 'Abbās Abū Sāliḥ and Sāmī Makārim, *Tārīkh al-muwaḥḥidīn al-Durūz al-siyāsī* (Beirut: Manshūrāt al-majlis al-Durzī li'l-Buḥūth wa l'Inmā', 1977). See also Kamal S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1963), pp. xvii–xix and 3–79; Annie and Laurent Chabry, *Politique et minorités au Proche-Orient: les raisons d'une explosion* (Paris: Editions Maisonneuve & Larose, 1988), pp. 211–12; and Arnon Soffer, 'Lebanon, Where Demography is the Core of Politics and Life', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 22:2 (April 1986): 197–205.
5. Governmental statistics on the location of manufacturing enterprises in the 1960s clearly indicate the extent to which Lebanon's uneven development favoured Kisrawan and the suburbs of east Beirut and all but totally ignored other locales. See Yusif A. Sayigh, *Lebanese Entrepreneurs: The Role of the Business Leader in a Developing Economy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 54. According to one report, Mount Lebanon, excluding the Chouf district, was found to be most advanced in development and southern Lebanon and the Chouf were considered underdeveloped: Institut International de Recherches et de Formation en vue de Développement, *Lubnān yuwajih tanmiyatah* (Beirut: Ma'had al-tadrīb 'alā al-lame, 1963), pp. 231–40. Although Druze manufacturing enterprises increased in the 1970s in the Chouf area, their total number is still smaller than the number of enterprises found in any one of the Maronite manufacturing areas of Makallīs, Dikwani or Yayzu al-Malik. See Nazi Richani, 'The Druze of Mount Lebanon: Class Formation in a Civil War', *Middle East Report*, 162 (January–February 1990): 26–30. The Lebanese ministry of health's December 1991 statistics provide further evidence of the advanced development of east Beirut in contrast to other parts of the capital. Of 47 private hospitals located in Mount Lebanon, 31 were in east Beirut, while only three were in the southern suburbs where an estimated half a million Shi'is lived.

the Shi'is inhabited the South and Baalbek/Hermel provinces – areas far removed from the economic, educational and social activities and advantages of the capital. As a result, these regions were all but abandoned by successive governments and the Shi'is are still considered Lebanon's most deprived and backward group. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that strongly led and tightly organized Druze and Maronite political parties representing and deriving support from their communities rather than from the nation as a whole emerged in the 1930s and 1940s respectively, while a Shi'i movement arose only in the late 1960s.⁶

The power-sharing formula that evolved as a result of the 1943 National Pact featured proportional representation according to sect size. This caused great discontent among various religious groups who found themselves disadvantaged and who were resentful of Maronite hegemony. Among those groups were the Druze, whose small numbers relegated them to minor governmental positions and few seats in parliament, and the Shi'is, who felt themselves underrepresented despite having probably grown to be Lebanon's largest sect.⁷

As Maronite leaders saw the situation, the rise of the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon's refugee camps after 1967 threatened to tip the sectarian balance in favour of the Muslims, which they thought would inevitably lead to reform measures in the latter's favour. At the same time, partly to increase Druze power, opposition leaders like Kamal Jumblatt strengthened ties with the Palestinian guerrilla leaders during the prelude to the civil war. Fear of loss of control and

6. See John P. Entelis, 'The Politics of Partition: Christian Perspectives on Lebanon's National Identity', *International Insight*, 1:5 (May–June 1981): 41; Tewfik Khalaf, 'The Phalange and the Maronite Community: From Lebanonism to Maronitism', in Roger Owen, ed., *Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon* (London: Ithaca, 1976), p. 45; Karim Pakradouni, 'Structure des Kataeb' (Mémoire de Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures de Sciences Politiques', Beirut, 27 September 1967); John P. Entelis, *Pluralism and Party Transformation in Lebanon: al-Kataib 1936–1970* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984). Of interest to this study is the fact that the early organizational charts of both the Christian Kataeb and Druze PSP parties show that bureaux concerned with social, educational and health affairs were included in the parties' charters. See Pakradouni, 'Les Structures', p. 30.

7. Mohammad Faour, 'The Demography of Lebanon: A Reappraisal', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27:4 (October 1991): 636. Faour was able to compile statistics on Muslim and Christian populations in all areas of Lebanon from the Saudi food distribution programme in 1988. From this report, given known areas of Shi'i concentration, it can be inferred that approximately 307,000 Shi'is resided in the southern suburbs, 328,000 in the Bekaa and 354,000 in the South. The Shi'is thus comprise about one third of the population and are the largest sect. See also Augustus R. Norton, 'Shi'ism and Social Protest in Lebanon', in Juan R. I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie, eds, *Shi'ism and Social Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 158.

identity led to Maronite militancy and the formation of a fighting wing by the Kataeb party, which Israel encouraged and supported.⁸ Syria and other Arab countries lent their assistance to what became known as the Lebanese National Movement, a coalition of leftist/Muslim parties loosely allied with the PLO.

The young Christian militia leader, Bashir Gemayel, was the first person to call for the removal of foreigners and opponents from Maronite areas. This occurred when the Lebanese Front (the umbrella organization that consolidated all the Christian forces) emptied and razed the Palestinian camps in east Beirut and the *bidonville* at Karantina. The next step was to be the 'liberation' of west Beirut, and, eventually, of all Lebanon.

On the Druze side, the Popular Army (*al-jaysh al-sha'abi*) was forming under the banner of Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) with help from Syria. Well equipped and well trained, the Lebanese Forces, which had consolidated their power in east Beirut, and the Popular Army controlled compact and easily defensible domains from which they fought each other for more than 13 years. The Lebanese Forces lost the ruinous Mountain War of 1983 when they attempted to invade the Druze heartland.

In the main the Shi'is were either tenant farmers on the large estates of traditional land-owning families or employees of the state-owned tobacco monopoly. Sayyid Muhammed Husayn Fadlallah, said to be Hizballah's spiritual guide in the 1980s, blamed the state for Shi'i backwardness, since it never adopted an agricultural policy that would allow the Shi'i community to earn a decent living and educate its children.⁹ A great deal of evidence supports this view and unfortunately it remains true today.¹⁰ These conditions were mainly responsible for the emigration of many Shi'is to West African countries such as Guinea, Ivory Coast and Liberia, and for their migration to Beirut where they congregated in slums and hoped to find work.¹¹

By contrast with the Druze and Maronite parties that were tightly organized and derived support from their communities rather than from the nation as a whole, the Shi'is tended to join secular opposition parties such as the Communist party and the Syrian Social National Party. A Shi'i movement arose only in the late 1960s.

8. Elaine C. Hagopian, 'Maronite Hegemony to Maronite Militancy: The Creation and Disintegration of Lebanon', *Third World Quarterly*, 10:4 (October 1989): 106.

9. Interview, 12 and 19 August 1992, Beirut.

10. See also Chapter 10, pp. 232–3, 238–41, 256–7.

11. See Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi, eds, *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration* (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies in association with I.B.Tauris, 1992), which contains articles by Didier Bigo on the Ivory Coast, H. Laurens van der Laan on West Africa, Said Boumedouha on Senegal, and Devendra M. Misra on Nigeria.

The ulema had little to do with the formation of Shi'i group consciousness, since they were unable to resist the domination imposed by large well-established landowning families. Imam Musa Sadr, raised in Iran and educated in religious schools there and in Iraq, nevertheless set in motion a process that resulted in significant changes when he settled in Lebanon in 1959. Grasping the political potential of social assistance as a means of outflanking the traditional elites and entering the political arena, Sadr underwrote a string of religious and vocational schools and a number of orphanages using funds available to him from his contacts with the religious authorities in Najaf and Qom.¹² The imam's role in establishing institutions important to his community's political development is well known. Chief among them was the Movement of the Deprived (*Harakat al-Mahrumin*) founded in 1974, whose military branch (*Harakat Amal*) was trained in Baalbek to resist Israeli activities in the South.¹³ Nevertheless, at the outset of the civil war Amal was politically immature and lacked institutional coherence. More Shi'is probably died in the fighting than did any other group, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the community's total membership, but most of them still fought in the ranks of leftist parties in 1975–76. After Imam Sadr's disappearance while on a trip to Libya in 1978, a power struggle developed over the leadership of the SISC, which he had founded, in which Nabih Berri, a lawyer and the head of the Amal militia, eventually triumphed.¹⁴

Shi'i leaders nevertheless lacked most of the resources enjoyed by Maronite and Druze counterparts. Sadr was neither in a position to exert unified control over any territory larger than a few blocks, nor was he able to expend effort or resources on any organized public services or social assistance programmes to aid the embattled Shi'is in west Beirut's poorest quarters and in the slums of Beirut's southern suburbs. Amal was a loose organization and lacked both institutional structures and the personnel that could have managed the social service programmes so badly needed by the community.

A year later, Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic revolution triumphed in Iran and that country began to seek greater influence in the region. Islamic Amal, later superseded by Hizballah, was founded in 1982 by Husayn al-Musawi when the Iranian government chided Berri for participating in the Committee of National Salvation that included representatives of the Maronite Kataeb, which Israel was

12. Shimon Shapira, 'The Imam Musa Sadr: Father of the Shi'i Resurgence in Lebanon', *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, 44 (Fall 1987): 124. See also chapters 6, 7 and 8 in this book.

13. See Chris Mowles, 'The Israeli Occupation of South Lebanon', *Third World Quarterly*, 7:4 (October 1986): 1351–66. The author argues that the occupation contributed to confessionalism and cantonization in Lebanon.

14. Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 213.

helping. For Iran's leaders, any form of association with a militia supported by the Hebrew state was anathema. Furthermore, Berri's negative position towards the PLO, which had caused Shi'i suffering in the South since the 1960s by drawing Israeli reprisals against al-Fateh's cross border raids, did not win him friends in Teheran.¹⁵ These positions had serious repercussions for Berri, for Iran's plans for Lebanon required local allies with policy affinities. A willingness to undertake militant *jihad* against the Israelis, to receive training from Palestinian instructors and to pursue an activist policy towards enlarging Islamic space in Lebanon were all critical components of Iran's projected strategy in Lebanon. Teheran was willing to commit considerable funds to an organization that could help Iran become a major actor in the regional political arena, and the Islamist leaders who founded Hizballah were quick to seize this opportunity.

Much has been written on Hizballah's rise and ideology.¹⁶ The party's emergence is widely perceived to have been a direct result of Iran's regional foreign policy needs. A number of radical groups such as *Tajammu' al-ulema al-muslimin fi Lubnan*, established in Lebanon in the pre-civil war period, and whose members fought in 1975, 1976 and in the Israeli invasion of 1982, were targeted as radical vanguard groups worthy of Iran's assistance.¹⁷ These associations joined or took the name Hizballah when activities began in Beirut, and their educational and philanthropic agencies and programmes were part of a growing network of social assistance. The demand for social welfare and distributive justice for the oppressed motivated the militant clergy and fused their political and social action. This was seen in the activities of the Association of the Ulema of Jabal 'Amil, which led the first resistance operations against Israeli forces occupying the South. Shi'i clerics running cultural centres, orphanages and welfare organizations in the South joined this struggle and formed the backbone of Hizballah's activities in that region.

The Shi'i ulema adhered to a potent yet simple ideology composed of orthodox Islamic principles and liberation Shi'ism as voiced by Ayatollah Khomeini and Lebanon's well-known Shi'i theologian Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah.¹⁸ Consistent with the principles of Islam, the ideology is deeply concerned with social welfare and Sayyid Fadlallah founded a number of charitable institutions, schools, clinics and orphanages in west Beirut. For example, in the Nab'a quarter, which was conquered by the Lebanese Front in 1975 but later recaptured, he established a

15. For details, see Chapter 9, pp. 210–11.

16. For a list of books see Chapter 9, footnote 2.

17. Shapira, 'The Origins of Hizballah': 122, 126–7.

18. See Muhammad Husayn Fadl Allāh, *al-Islām wa manṭiq al-quwā* (Beirut: al-Dār al-Islāmiyya, 1979). For Sayyid Fadlallah's relationship with Hizballah see Dr Mahmud A. Faksh, 'The Shi'a Community of Lebanon: A New Assertive Political Force', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 14:3 (Spring 1991): 22.

welfare association to provide aid, social assistance and education to needy Shi'is arriving in Beirut from the South and the Bekaa. These institutions and the others clerics had already established in Shi'i areas gave the Shi'i version of political Islam an early footing in terms of its services to the community. Hizballah would later vastly expand these services when, like the Maronites and Druzes, it found itself controlling and defending territory inhabited mainly by coreligionists.

The implications of the foregoing review can now be summarized. The structure, organization and preparedness of the most powerful Druze and Maronite parties in the civil war zone and their grip on their communities in these areas, increased the likelihood that they would make use of these assets to solve social problems associated with the ravages of war.

The recently mobilized Shi'is, for their part, had few resources on which to draw in comparison with the other communities. Amal's leadership was inexperienced and shared influence over the populous urban quarters with leftist parties, many of whose members were Shi'i. In this sense, Amal was not the institutional expression of the Shi'i community in the way the Druze PSP was at the time of the civil war. Despite the existence of other Druze factions, at times of emergency the hardy mountaineers are well known to unite behind the stronger of the community's two hereditary leaders, as they did in this case. Berri had neither the legitimacy of an old established party behind him nor the capacity to use assistance from an external power to help him forcefully unite his community, as did Bashir Gemayel of the Lebanese Forces. Amal was rather the emerging reflection of the convergence of diverse forces and groups within the Shi'i community. In fact the 'Shi'i catch-up' discourse, which the Amal leadership often promoted, could be interpreted as part of their attempt to expand their legitimacy at the expense of segments within the Shi'i community that did not share their interests. Furthermore, Amal's attention was divided between the civil war in Beirut and confrontations with al-Fateh's brigades in the South. It was not until 1984 that Amal burst upon the national scene in any real strength after a ferocious battle with the Lebanese army and, by that time, Hizballah was on the march as well. An integrated programme of social and public services was out of the question for Amal and, for the most part, still is.

In contrast to Amal's experience, Hizballah benefited from the firm footing Iran's government and religious organizations gave to the Party of God in terms of training, material resources and organizational assistance. The creation of a fully-fledged fighting force meant that social assistance had to be provided for the families of the *mujahidin* and the children of martyrs. These situational factors, combined with the party's tight organization, its ideological appeal for many young Shi'is and the leadership's clear understanding of the importance of social work at the grass roots when seeking to promote Islamic values, meant that this party,

unlike its Shi'i rival, would have both the wherewithal and the politico-religious impulse to build and sustain programmes of social and public services. The fact that the Shi'is were concentrated in three main areas made these services fairly easy to deliver. Amal's inability to match Hizballah's performance in the area of health, education and general welfare would rebound on the movement in a negative way later when many Shi'is repaid the Party of God for services rendered with votes.

CIVIL WAR AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Property damage and fear of death and injury during the war caused massive population shifts in which more than a third of Lebanon's three million people were ultimately involved.¹⁹ These migrations resulted in the formation of homogeneous and exclusive enclaves. One such enclave was Beirut's southern suburb, al-Dahiya, which had formerly been home to a majority of Maronite Christians. Shi'is had been migrating to this area for many years in search of economic opportunity, but with the onset of Israeli raids they began to arrive in the populous area in droves. Sectarian fighting and violent incidents around the capital caused most of the Christian population to flee the area and to seek refuge in regions that Christian militias protected. In sum, Christians were leaving the area and Shi'is were flooding in from the other war zone in the South, and so al-Dahiya became a 'canton' like those mentioned earlier. Moreover, the state personnel that could have dealt with the problems caused by population shifts were largely absent, which further contributed to the disruption of public services. These absences occurred because positions in the Lebanese civil service are distributed on a proportional basis according to sect size. Thus, in mainly Muslim west Beirut and the capital's southern suburbs government jobs that had been held by Maronites who had fled the area remained vacant, for by law only members of the same sect could fill them. With the disappearance of municipal workers, household refuse piled up and water, sewerage and electricity plants that had suffered war damage went unrepaired. This situation placed pressure on the political factions to solve these problems.

An initiative by students in east Beirut's Ashrafiyya quarter found a solution to

19. Faour provides statistical evidence of a radical shift in the religious composition of many areas in 'The Demography of Lebanon': 638. See also Salim Nasr, 'La transition des chiites vers Beyrouth: mutations sociales et mobilisation communautaire à la veille de 1975', in CERMOC, *Mouvements communautaires et espaces urbains au Machreq* (Paris: Editions Sinbad, 1985), p. 18. Larry Pintak claims that somewhere between half and two-thirds of the Lebanese population have been forced to move at least once since 1975 in his *Internal Migrations* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1982), p. 182. See also André Bourgey, 'La guerre et ses conséquences géographiques au Liban', *Annales de Géographie*, 94:521 (January-February 1985): 1-37.

the Maronite enclave in November 1976;²⁰ Lebanese Forces began a programme of public and social services later that year. The Druze PSP provided *ad hoc* services from 1976 onwards, but only created a fully-fledged Civil Administration of the Mountains in 1983 in response to a major flight of Christians during and after the war fought there by Druze and Christian militias.²¹

Immediate crises were quickly dealt with by using whatever personnel and equipment were on hand. Yet many grave problems remained with respect to housing displaced people, rehabilitating damaged schools, finding teachers and school administrators to replace those who had fled and restoring disrupted public services. The magnitude and cost of solving these problems required comprehensive and long-term management by the new bureaucrats.

An important asset the sectarian militias enjoyed was the capacity of their leaders or representatives, who retained their parliamentary seats and ministerial posts throughout the extended period of hostilities, to channel state resources to their own areas. Berri was able to capitalize on such resources when the Council of the South was separated from the ministry of social affairs and given an independent status to handle social welfare and reconstruction in the southern region in the aftermath of the 1978 Israeli invasion. According to Dr Husayn Kana'an, its president from 1980 to 1984 and who had links with Amal, the council had extraordinary administrative powers and financial independence, which allowed quick action to be taken. It was involved in repairing roads, schools and houses, building hospitals like the one at Nabatiyya, and providing social assistance for needy families. A contract with the AUB hospital in Beirut in which the council guaranteed to pay for the treatment of patients sent to the capital from the South provided for the medical care of resistance fighters and the residents of southern and western Bekaa. The council was also charged with replacing hundreds of Christian teachers who had left or been driven out of the region.

The creation in 1984 of the ministry of the South, headed by Nabih Berri, acknowledged Amal's influence at the national level. According to Kana'an, the ministry was at first more of a political gesture than a functioning institution. However, after Kana'an was moved to head the Central Bank in 1985, the new ministry soon absorbed the funds and functions of the Council of the South. Dr Adnan Sulayman, the director of the ministry of the South from 1984 until its dissolution in 1989, claimed that no formal link with Amal existed other than Berri's presidency of both organizations,²² yet to all intents and purposes the

20. Interview with Dr George Frayha, former coordinator of popular committees and chief of staff of Gemayel government in 1982, 10 and 11 September 1992, Brummana.

21. Interview with Dr Salam al-^cAwar, 21 July 1989, Kirnayyil, el-Metn.

22. Interview with Dr Adnan Sulayman, director of the ministry of the South from 1984 to 1989, 4 August 1992, Beirut.

ministry seems to have officially stamped the South as Amal's fief. The new ministry handled a number of large projects that normally would have come under the aegis of various governmental ministries. They included the extensive repair of Litani River bridges at Kasmiya, which an Israeli raid had damaged, and other large public works. There is no doubt that the substantial funds that were available and the resulting public works and assistance programmes they made possible greatly enhanced Berri's communal and national stature. In the same year the ministry of the South was formed, Nabih Berri's wife, Randa, moved into the health services field with the inauguration of a centre for the physical rehabilitation and training of the handicapped in the Dahiya. Theoretically independent of Amal, the pilot project grew into the Lebanese Welfare Association for the Handicapped with headquarters in the Barbir quarter of west Beirut.²³ Soon centres were opened in the South and a prosthetics factory opened up in Tyre.

Several facts stand out from the above review. Amal's prestige in the South was heightened in 1980 and 1984 when it was able to influence large-scale public projects and social assistance at no direct cost to the party. Since competition with Hizballah was growing, this was especially important. Amal, however, did little to assist the Shi'i population in the Dahiya. The reasons why Amal was not deeply involved in public services in the Dahiya from 1984 to 1990 were above all financial. Massive resources were needed to tackle the problems of that area and the government could not be enticed to begin normal services there or to start reconstruction – measures that Amal could have exploited. Furthermore, no foreign patronage was available that Berri could tap to assist Dahiya residents. While Amal had not been without friends in Iran, chief among them Mostafa Chamran, the fall of the provisional government in November 1979, the death of Chamran in 1981 and the consolidation of hardliner rule in the summer of 1981 cut it off from conceivable sources of Iranian patronage.²⁴

By contrast, social assistance in the South was deemed very important to the Hizballah-led national resistance because it would help keep residents on the land in that highly dangerous region. More importantly, however, the refugees crowding the southern suburbs are registered voters of the southern and Bekaa villages of their birth and go back to the heartland to cast their ballots. Given all this, concentration on south Lebanon and the western Bekaa through its ministry made more sense and provided more rewards for Amal than did work in the Dahiya for which there was little government support. Another reason why Amal failed to do more in the field of public and social services was that, despite having risen to the

23. Interview with Taghrid Fayyed, treasurer of the Lebanese Association of the Handicapped, 29 September 1992, Beirut. The first centre was located in the southern suburbs but was closed down when Hizballah took over the area.

24. For details see Chapter 9, pp. 209–11.

status of a major force in a single decade, it nevertheless lacked the administrative structure or manpower necessary to provide basic services for the half million residents of the southern suburbs. Not until the cessation of Shi'i-Maronite hostilities across the green line, and Amal's loss of the Dahiya to Hizballah in bloody skirmishes during 1988, did huge injections of foreign aid from Iran, party discipline and tight organization encourage a more programmed approach to social services for the Shi'i community there in the way it had done earlier in the Baalbek area, the training ground of Hizballah's fighting force, *al-muqawama al-islamiyya*.

HIZBALLAH'S FIEFS

Hizballah's power base in Baalbek was formed well after the beginning of the civil war and Baalbek was never a battlefield to the extent that the other territories were. Nonetheless, its isolation in the Bekaa Valley made it a perfect training ground for clandestine movements. With the arrival of Iranian Revolutionary Guards in 1982 to take part in the struggle against Israel and to help organize revolutionary cadres, the formerly sleepy agricultural district became a beehive of military and social activities intended, as giant posters and roadside banners proclaimed, to fight the Zionist enemy and liberate Jerusalem.

The Iranian contingent played an important role in recruiting and training *muhajidin*, for their presence at the side of Lebanese Shici leaders drove home two major points. One was that the young men who joined Hizballah were part of a much larger, global army formed to strike the enemies of Islam wherever Muslims were oppressed. Martin Kramer has rightly drawn attention to the seductiveness of such a universalistic appeal for deprived Shici youths seeking a more important meaning for their lives.²⁵ In addition, the presence in the Bekaa of people who had actually fought in the Iranian revolution was a powerful reminder that the Shici activism that vanquished the US-trained and supplied Iranian army and unseated the Shah, could bear fruit in Lebanon if the same level of faith, discipline and preparedness were achieved by those training to fight the enemies of Islam in Lebanon.

The political 'cleansing' of this area began with clashes between the Iranians and the Lebanese army in Baalbek and a nearby village in November 1982. This was followed by the distribution of leaflets attacking Berri and Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddin, chairman of the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council (SISC), and then a combined Iranian and Lebanese attack on an army barracks near Baalbek in spring 1983.²⁶ Since Iranian-supplied war materiel was allowed to cross the Syrian

25. Martin Kramer, 'Redeeming Jerusalem: The Pan-Islamic Premise of Hizballah', in David Menashri, ed., *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World* (Boulder: Westview, 1990).

26. *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, 7 (1982-1983): 674-7.

controlled valley freely on its way to the Baalbek-Hermel area, the region quickly became a tightly run, heavily fortified place with territorial markings – giant posters of Imam Khomeini – that indicated that this was Islamic soil.

The substantial salaries and benefits Hizballah reportedly paid its fighters, and Iran underwrote, greatly encouraged the rapid growth of Hizballah's military wing.²⁷ In 1985 an estimated 5000 Hizballah partisans marched in Baalbek's Jerusalem Day parade while Hizballah's arsenal was reported to have reached considerable size and sophistication.²⁸ Nevertheless, to field a fighting force one needs more than military materiel. Field hospitals must be set up and bureaux established and staffed to distribute salaries and benefits to the fighters and their families, as well as to the relatives of the fallen. An area bereft of government services must also be managed when natural disasters occur like flooding and heavy snowstorms. The massive expenditures needed for the party and for the inhabitants of nearby villages and towns greatly exceeded what local donations could provide. Iranian start-up assistance and continuous injections of money and materiel were therefore critical to Hizballah's capacity to build a fighting force in the Bekaa. Providing for a community whose sons were engaged in *jihad* meant that those suffering the enemy's retaliations in the South would also need assistance. As we have seen, Amal had been able to associate itself with governmental reconstruction and aid to the villagers in the South, but could not undertake the social and public services that were necessary to meet the growing emergencies in Beirut's southern suburbs, into which the victims of Israeli attacks were flocking.

In 1985 the first clashes broke out between Amal and Hizballah when Berri appeared ready to reach an understanding with the Israelis in the South. Amal's militia had been estimated at 30,000 in 1982,²⁹ and its takeover of west Beirut with the Druze PSP in 1984 further indicated the level to which the party's strength had grown. Amal thus remained predominant in the southern suburbs until 1988, when Hizballah challenged it both in the South and in west Beirut in a series of clashes that ultimately required Syrian and Iranian mediation. While Amal prevailed in the

27. Reportedly Hizballah paid its militiamen \$150-200 a month, not including food and benefits. *Al-Nahar Arab and International*, 645, 24 September 1989: 16.

28. Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), p. 106. By 1990, 10,000 fighters took part in the parade. Established by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979 as a means of renewing commitment to the struggle to recapture one of Islam's holiest places, Jerusalem Day was soon exported to Lebanon.

29. Henry W. Degenhardt, ed., *International Revolutionary and Dissident Movements: An International Guide* (Harlow: Longman, 1988), p. 214. See also Clinton Bailey, 'Lebanon's Shi'is after the 1982 War', in Martin Kramer, ed., *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution* (Boulder: Westview, 1987), pp. 219-36.

South, the large-scale fighting in the southern suburbs left Hizballah in full control there, with Amal's presence limited to only a few blocks. The Dahiya thus suffered the same violent cleansing of antagonistic forces that had occurred when the Lebanese army was subdued in the Bekaa. As previously noted, the vast majority of the southern suburbs' Maronite residents had already fled across the green line into the Christian residential quarters of Furn al-Shubbak and 'Ayn al-Rumani, and this left Hizballah with a mainly Shi'i enclave to administer and service. The dramatic political acts against Westerners and Western interests, such as the explosions at the American embassy in west Beirut and the US marines' barracks at Beirut international airport in 1983, which were attributed to Hizballah but denied by its leaders, the Party of God's avowed willingness to liberate Jerusalem and its widening public assistance contrasted in almost every way with Amal's orientations and capabilities.³⁰

As the wide-scale destruction visited upon the South led to its gradual desertion by its Shi'i population,³¹ residents of the southern suburbs already traumatized by the civil war were further strained by the arrival of thousands of refugees who crowded the densely populated quarters. Adding to the Shi'i tragedy in 1983, the Lebanese army severely shelled the Dahiya, reducing whole blocks to rubble and creating more homeless and destitute people; this area remains dilapidated to this day. The sheer magnitude of the destruction in this Shi'i domain made anything short of a new Marshall Plan seem incidental.

Islamic groups had begun social work in Beirut's 'misery belts' well before 1976. With Iran's help, however, important social organizations appeared in urban centres such as the Imam Khomeini Assistance Committee, which opened in Beirut in 1982 with branches in Tyre, Sidon and Baalbek. This organization has granted 130,000 scholarships, has helped 135,000 needy families and has given interest-free loans.³² The Islamic Health Organization was established in 1984 and Recon-

30. Faksh, 'The Shi'a Community of Lebanon': 52. For the Shi'i-PLO rift in the South and its effect on the parties, see Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East* (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1979), p. 128. See also Marius Deeb, 'Shi'a Movements in Lebanon: Their Formation, Ideology, Social Basis and Links with Iran and Syria', *Third World Quarterly*, 9:2 (April 1988): 683-98; and Helena Cobban, 'The Growth of Shi'i Protest in Lebanon', in Cole and Keddle, eds, *Shi'ism and Social Protest*, pp. 137-55.

31. On this see Itamar Rabinovich, *The War for Lebanon 1970-1983* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984). For the devastating consequences of the Israeli incursion for the economic life of the Shi'is in southern Lebanon, see Jacques Seguin, *Le Liban-Sud: espace périphérique, espace convoité* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1989), pp. 143-4.

32. *Atlas mondial de l'islam activiste* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1991), p. 150.

struction Campaign (Jihad al-Bina'), an Islamic engineering and contracting organization, was created in 1988 'when the Islamic movement was ripe'.³³ This novel institution deserves attention because it was able to provide the emergency services needed in the southern suburbs and still carries out most of Hizballah's many heavy construction projects, maintaining an efficient working relationship with the Party of God similar to that the other parties established with their public works committees.

Reconstruction Campaign (RC) is registered as a Lebanese charitable association and is inspired by the Iranian organization of the same name that was established during the Iranian revolution. Besides training and technical advice, there is no other connection between the two. RC's mission is to repair war damage and to address the unattended daily needs of the population in all three areas of Shi'i concentration.

A daily refuse collection for half a million residents began in the Dahiya in 1988. This was necessary in that area, for governmental agencies in several municipalities were entirely inactive. Reconstruction Campaign continued this service for more than four years until the Lebanese Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) and later the sanitation department took over.³⁴ Reconstruction Campaign is still repairing the Dahiya's drainage and sewerage systems to ameliorate the insanitary conditions caused by flooding and backup.

In 1990, during the Aoun administration, the water and electricity services were cut in the Dahiya because of the fighting, precipitating a severe emergency. The only answer was to establish of a large-scale public service programme. Thus, with the Islamic Republic of Iran's help, Reconstruction Campaign built 4000-litre water reservoirs in each district of the southern suburbs and filled each of them five times a day from five continuously circulating tanker trucks. In addition, generators mounted on lorries went regularly from building to building to provide the electricity needed to pump water from private cisterns. This service ended when public electricity was partially restored in late 1990, but Reconstruction Campaign continues as the main source of drinking water for half a million people.

This revealed a great deal about the government's situation and Hizballah's impact in the Dahiya at that time. Through years of neglect and extensive war-related damage, an estimated 40 per cent of the water from Ain al-Dilbih, the area's main source, had been lost and its purity gravely compromised. Several

33. Interview with Sultan al-Assad, director of Reconstruction Campaign, 15 September 1992, Beirut.

34. The CDR was created in 1977 to deal with reconstruction and planning. Utilizing international aid, it managed projects and subcontracted work to local companies for road and electricity repair and school reconstruction. All parties put pressure on the agency for assistance, and most sought credit for work carried out under its auspices.

wells Unicef dug in the area reportedly failed. Aggravating the discontent of Dahiya residents and of the large numbers of refugees who remain there was the fact that a new multi-million dollar pipeline carrying water from Damour runs directly through the Dahiya on its way to the Ras Beirut without distributing a drop to the southern suburbs. In an interview the then minister of housing, Muhammad Baydun, who is also an Amal supporter, underlined the desperation of the Dahiya's water situation, but given the government's decisions and capabilities at that time, he expressed his inability to get any action to relieve the parched region.³⁵ This and other issues relating both to inadequate public utilities and to damaged or wholly lacking infrastructure aroused considerable public attention late in 1991 when Hizballah began openly to exhort the Hrawi government to meet its social responsibilities in the Dahiya.³⁶

Hizballah had often mobilized Dahiya residents for strikes and protests of one kind or another, but in December 1991 the party took a new track by encouraging the formation of residential and professional groups in each quarter of the southern suburbs with a view to pressing the government for action. As we shall see, this track has been continued and heavily emphasized. On 30 December 1991 former party general secretary Abbas al-Musawi called on representatives of these and other associations to form an umbrella organization, the Dahiya Activists and Residents Committee, to consider the water problem and other pressing needs of the area. Hizballah's Haj Ibrahim Shammās, Beirut director of social services, and Haj 'Abdallah Kasir, regional director of Beirut, were part of the group that considered a paper presented by Hizballah's Centre for Developmental Studies. The study, a detailed report on the state's developmental and financial policy and on what general services were available and the condition of the infrastructure in the Dahiya, recommended that Muslim engineers be used to carry out the civil planning of the southern suburbs because the 'area is one of Islamic population concentration that has been subjected to sectarian discrimination'.³⁷ Statistics were presented that compared the water resources of the Dahiya with those of other urban areas on the basis of population size and offered solutions, including cost estimates. Other inadequate facilities were treated similarly. This formed the basis of the new association's 14 January press conference at which a press communiqué entitled 'The Southern Suburbs: An Area of Misery Awaiting Solution' was released. The names of 27 people representing development committees and various professional and religious associations located in the Dahiya were attached.

35. Interview with the minister of housing, Muhammad Yusuf Baydun, 7 May 1992, Beirut.

36. See 'Khitāta Hizb Allāh al-Dāhiya al-janūbiyya', *al-Hayāt*, 14 February 1991, p. 2.

37. Centre for Developmental Studies, Hizballah, 'al-Dāhiya al-janūbiyya ma'sat tantazir al-hall', pp. 1-6.

Haj Husayn Shami, director of Hizballah's social services, explained that mobilizing people to demand their rights would continue as a major part of the Islamic Movement's programme because many people were unaccustomed to making their voices heard on social issues.³⁸ It is important to note that 14 years after the first postwar government took office Reconstruction Campaign is still providing water, repairing electricity, sewerage and water systems and generally servicing those residing in the southern suburbs. Hizballah is widely credited for helping the Lebanese government avoid a social catastrophe there.

THE DYNAMICS OF PROGRAMME EXPANSION

Continuing gaps in normal governmental services over a considerable period of time often seemed to impose their own logic *vis-à-vis* service institutions. For example, state employees often left electrical breakdowns unattended, requiring exasperating private effort and expense to repair. In Druze and Christian areas it made more sense for administrators to pay state employees (who were at best working part-time during the 1980s) a little extra, buy their tools and materials and keep a team on call permanently. Eventually their services were placed under the control of the parties' public works committees.³⁹ But matters were different in the Shi'i areas. Here the experiences of Reconstruction Campaign, which progressed from distributing water to building new classrooms in the Dahiya before going on to a range of projects in the Bekaa, is a good example of how established institutions used staff and equipment to move from tasks emanating from a general problem – often an acute war-related emergency – to new areas of service.

For instance, in 1988 the Iranian Martyr's Foundation, which paid 100 per cent of the medical expenses for Hizballah's injured fighters and 70 per cent of the cost of caring for injured civilians, built al-Rasul al-A'zam hospital in the Dahiya in order to handle these cases.⁴⁰ The services of this large, modern hospital complex are, however, available to all residents of the area. As Hizballah adherents direct and staff the facility, which is built around a mosque, the hospital is a constant reminder of the important work undertaken in Lebanon by the Islamic Republic of Iran and its Lebanese partner. Of interest is the ferrying back and forth of patients and staff of this facility to the polls by Hizballah volunteers on election days.

The foundation went on to develop other projects to help the families of dead and injured fighters to become self-sufficient. For example, vocational schools for

38. Interview with Haj Husayn Shami, director of Hizballah's social services, 19 September 1992, Beirut.

39. Interview with Nadim Nammur, director of the public works committee, 26 July 1988, Beiteddine.

40. *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, 12 (1988): 194.

girls were established in Beirut and the Bekaa to train the daughters of fallen Hizballah militiamen and subsidized workshops were set up to employ these fighters' dependants.

The director of Hizballah's social services, Haj Shami, explained to the author that in Hizballah's view an Islamic imperative was involved in the progression from one task to another. He observed that there is almost unlimited work to be done in Beirut's so-called misery belts, which, since the war, have become belts of desperation. He averred that since Islam is based on service to mankind this work must go ahead as a religious duty, 'whether Lebanon is an Islamic state or not'.⁴¹

The new sectarian public administrators sought out more areas of service as the public's wartime needs were further defined.⁴² In 1985, responding to pressures of human suffering and need and benefiting from a growing pool of available volunteers, Randa Berri's organization began secretarial and sewing courses to provide the handicapped with a means of subsistence in various towns in the South and in the Batrakiyya area of west Beirut. It was not long before a medical laboratory in Nabatiyya, a dental clinic and a chain of medical dispensaries and pharmacy cooperatives were opened to provide for the needs of war victims. In 1993 a large and ultramodern medical centre for the handicapped opened in Sarafand near Sidon.⁴³

Once such public service and social assistance programmes were begun, it was hard to resist the momentum for expansion. Pressures from the needy on the one hand and from volunteers and creative administrators on the other made new work

41. Interview with Haj Husayn Shami, who cited Imam Khomeini's views on this point as well.

42. For example, the collapse of state authority in Lebanon made it a prime target for the illegal dumping of expired and contaminated imports from all over the world. Consequently, in late 1977 the Christian Lebanese Forces' popular committees opened a consumer protection department. Soon volunteers began to search out and destroy outdated drug supplies and foodstuffs and to prevent cargoes of putrefied meat being offloaded at the ports. When the party's leadership changed, the former head of the popular committees' consumer protection office, Victor Ghurayib, was recruited to carry on some of the popular committees' functions and to construct a similar network of bureaux in Maronite areas under the auspices of the social welfare agency (*mu'assasat al-tadmun al-ijtima'iyya*), which opened in March 1987. This institution and its 35 branch offices matched needy people with generous donors. The result was that 25,000 families became regular recipients of various types and amounts of aid under this agency from 1987 onwards.

43. Interview with Taghrid Fayyad. The centre is designed to house 200 in-patients for stays of about six months and offers physical therapy and 25 fields of vocational training. The care of the 500 patients at present being aided is funded from Lebanese expatriate donations and help from NGOs.

possible within existing institutional frameworks. Thus, by the mid-1980s social services and welfare foundations were *de rigueur*.⁴⁴ Since these institutions added to the stature and legitimacy of new elites, just as the Islamic Maqasid Foundation had long contributed to the prestige of the west Beirut Sunni Muslim Salam family with which it was linked,⁴⁵ the new leaders found it very productive politically to back enlarged services and related initiatives.

DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

There was a general tendency for social organizations to take up projects geared to the future needs of their populations and locales. Several factors other than the dynamics generated by the public, new party-linked bureaucrats and volunteers seem to have had an important bearing on this trend. For instance, little planning and development work could be expected from the government, at least in the short term. Equally, the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), set up in 1977 with help from international donors, was perennially short of funds and cabinet and parliamentary sessions were difficult to convene even during the most critical moments of the war period. In addition, international organizations were willing to contribute large amounts of money and technical assistance only for projects oriented towards Lebanon's needs after the cessation of hostilities.

As the crisis dragged on many Lebanese people became increasingly bitter and disillusioned with warlords of all persuasions, including their own, for their failure to end the conflict. In many cases, party discipline was hard to achieve and many excesses, including corruption and protection rackets, were common. It is noteworthy, however, that to our knowledge Hizballah's forces have never been accused of such behaviour. In fact, the party's strong discipline has generated feelings akin to awe among many Lebanese, Muslims and Christians alike. Over the last decade the author has interviewed hundreds of Lebanese from all walks of life on their positions regarding Hizballah. While many are still uncomfortable with the strait-laced social positions of the fundamentalist group, not one individual had a negative word to say about party leaders and members' integrity or social assistance. In fact, many declared that they wished the government were half as effective in the social domain as was Hizballah. In addition to the natural desire to provide for the well being of their constituents, political elites also hoped that fresh

44. Kamal A. Beyoghlou, 'Lebanon's New Leaders: Militias in Politics', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 12:3 (Spring 1989): 28-36.

45. See Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State, 1840-1985* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986), pp. 45-56 and 67-83 for information on the Salam family and its link with the Maqasid Foundation's health, educational and welfare activities. Al-Maqasid was founded in 1878.

and appealing future-oriented projects would revitalize the party image. For these reasons social action programmes branched out in new directions.

As in many backward regions of the developing world, land tenure and political domination were traditionally closely linked in the South and in the Baalbek region. With this connection broken or extremely frayed, as the parliamentary elections of 1992 showed,⁴⁶ large injections of aid were needed to support the efforts of small independent farmers if sustained agricultural development and a rising standard of living were to occur.

Led by Hizballah, the Islamic Movement put most of its efforts into agricultural development in the Bekaa Valley. Helped by a gift of 30 tractors from Iran, a well-planned and accelerated programme has been carried out under the auspices of Reconstruction Campaign. Agricultural cooperatives, begun in 1988, have been opened at the rate of one a year. Pamphlets in Arabic on the use of materials and new techniques are distributed and qualified engineers offer field demonstrations and consultations free of charge. Reconstruction Campaign has dug water wells in various places in the Bekaa and the South. One, for example, brought water to the village of Libaya, which had been dry for 20 years. In May 1990 a veterinary centre was opened in Sahmur in the western Bekaa; work on a modern agro-technical centre and a school in Hawsh Barada was also begun along with work on a large polyclinic medical centre in Hermel. In 1992 Hizballah introduced free transport between Baalbek and outlying towns and added a restaurant that serves meals for the poor at no cost to its chain of cut-price supermarkets, pharmacies and clinics.⁴⁷ At Tayibi, five kilometres from Baalbek, Jihad al-Bina' built a large complex of resort like bungalows in the summer of 1992 to house young people taking part in Hizballah-sponsored cultural and recreational activities.

Reconstruction Campaign's regular publication of the number of dwellings newly built and repaired immediately after Israeli attacks in the South and the Bekaa has drawn public attention to the public welfare commitment as well as the organizational efficiency of Shi'i Islamic institutions. For instance, one month after Israel's destructive 1996 military campaign (Grapes of Wrath), press reports indicated that a Reconstruction Campaign had already rehabilitated more than 2800 structures damaged by the Israelis in 106 locations in the South and would be undertaking reconstruction in the Bekaa and Beirut shortly.⁴⁸ Moreover, Recon-

46. Amal's candidates swept the South, while Hizballah's took the Baalbek-Hermel area, which was not contested by Amal. With a few exceptions, traditional feudal figures were not returned to parliament.

47. *Al-Ahd*, 1 August 1989 for a list of dozens of pharmacies, medical dispensaries and dental clinics associated with Hizballah throughout Lebanon.

48. *Orient-Le Jour*, 13 June 1996, p. 2 and interview with Zuhayr Mansur, project engineer, Jihad al-Bina'.

struction Campaign has moved on from providing free low cost housing to those whose homes were destroyed in resistance areas to making such housing units available to the public. This work assumes greater importance when it is known that many Lebanese consider the failure to address adequately the issue of low-cost housing to be a major weakness of postwar governments.

Recently, Jihad al-Bina' began to grant credit to farmers in 190 villages of the Bekaa. Credit has a ceiling of about \$3000 and is complemented with technical assistance and loans. The organization operates two extension centres in the Bekaa that include demonstration plots, greenhouses, a dairy farm, and pathology and soil testing laboratories. A farmers' solidarity fund to compensate for their non-inclusion in the national security fund has been established in the Bekaa and even in the South, which is supposedly Amal's turf.⁴⁹

While the political motivation behind these activities is obvious, the main aim of Amal and Hizballah's developmental activities is to keep the Shi'i on their land and induce those who left to return. This is felt to be especially important in the South where there is a fear of Israeli designs on the area's water resources. Thus, under Nabih Berri's incumbency of the ministry of the South several large developmental projects were undertaken, the most important being an \$8 million water well project at Jilo, 15 kilometres from Tyre, which piped water to 36 villages. The recently inaugurated Zirariyya Bridge over the Litani River, built at a cost of \$2,400,000, aimed to open up the region, as did roads constructed near Tyre and Zirariyya. The hospital and highway bypass at Nabatiyya, schools in Burj Rahhal, Bisiriyya and Nabatiyya,⁵⁰ as well as the planned centre for the rehabilitation of the handicapped at Sarafand have diminished the image of the South as an abandoned no-man's land while enhancing Amal's role as a social benefactor.

When Amal's projects are added to the activities of the Islamic Movement it can be seen that considerable attention has been given to Shi'i regions since the community's awakening. The unresolved struggle for community leadership and the great needs of the Shi'i domains indicate that in the future social programmes and important developmental activities will continue to be stressed in Shi'i locales.

FINANCE AS A FACTOR IN THE SCOPE AND TYPES OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

Public services and projects cannot be provided gratis and the shape and location of some of Lebanon's power domains had an important bearing on what funds

49. Lamia el-Moubayed, 'Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Rural Development: Two Case Studies from Lebanon', draft (Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, October 1999), p. 18.

50. Interviews with Muhammad 'Ubayd and Yusuf Hasan, respectively president and vice-president of Amal's foreign affairs bureau, 20 July 1992, Beirut.

could be generated internally. For instance, during the war Amal, the Lebanese Forces and the PSP each exploited their coastal strip by opening illegal ports and charging for shipping and receiving cargoes. However, they all denied that party receipts from these sources directly financed their social assistance and public service operations. Moreover, they acknowledged receiving large donations from the parties or party leaders.

Druze and Maronite parties drew additional advantage from the areas and populations under their control being amenable to taxation. However, like Amal, they suffered drastic funding cuts when the militias were disarmed and the Lebanese army extended its authority to their strongholds during 1990/1. Since Hizballah's backing had not been derived from exploiting national resources or taxation, but had come mainly from the Iranian government and religious groups, the Party of God did not suffer the same plight as the other militias and was able to continue and even expand its services. This greatly enhanced Hizballah's 'Mr Clean' image.

The full amount of financial contributions from religious groups in Iran and aid from the Iranian government to the Islamic Movement cannot be accurately determined. It is reasonable to assume that the importance of the link between social assistance and the radical goals of some orthodox Shi'i groups would account for this reluctance to divulge sources of funding. It is known, however, that the Beirut office of the Martyr's Foundation forwards funds to its Tripoli, Beirut, Baalbek, Tyre and Nabatiyya branches to aid the families of martyrs. From all accounts the sums involved for monthly pensions and other benefits are considerable.⁵¹

According to Reconstruction Campaign director Sultan As'ad, efforts are made to supplement external aid by involving locals in project financing. For example, villagers raised \$18,000 of the \$120,000 needed to dig a well and add a clinic to the *husayniyya* in Libaya. They also contributed \$6000 worth of labour. Furthermore, according to Islamic principles, one-fifth of religious donations (*zakat*) may be spent on public projects. Sultan As'ad estimated that *zakat* from Lebanon and abroad accounts for about 20 per cent of the organization's working funds.

In imposing para-legal systems of taxation and exploiting government facilities for the main portion of their budgets, the social programmes of the PSP and the Lebanese Forces were most vulnerable to the extension of state authority to their areas. But this was not the case in the South: state funding of the Council of the

51. *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, 11 (1987): 167, reports that in January 1987 the director-general of the Beirut office of the Martyr's Foundation revealed that 785 billion Lebanese pounds had been spent in Lebanon from late 1982 until 1986 on monthly pensions alone. Other reports cite large sums transferred from Iran to Hizballah but are impossible to confirm. For example, according to *al-Nahar Arab and International*, 645, 24 September 1989, Hizballah's annual allocation from the Iranian national treasury was roughly \$140 million.

South, in which Amal has a strong interest, continued since it was perceived as being an important part of the national resistance effort. Nevertheless, Hizballah has been eager to point out that its organization and Reconstruction Campaign have addressed emergencies in the South more quickly, efficiently and impartially than the Council of the South, whose funds Berri and his supporters usually distribute. Also, since the election of its members to parliament in 1992 and thereafter, each time forming the largest wholly party bloc in parliament with between 9 and 12 members, Hizballah can ask to share in decisions about allocating the Council of the South's funds and take advantage of assistance offered by NGOs as well.⁵² This development permits some relief for Iranian institutions and also permits Hizballah to increase its autonomy, which might become important as its resistance role winds down and it becomes less critical to Iran's foreign policy needs.

THE LATENT FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL ACTION AND PROGRAMME VARIETY

As already noted, elites used social action programmes for more than their manifest humanitarian intentions. For instance, the separation of social institutions from political structures permitted service and welfare activities to be touted as apolitical and non-religious in nature and therefore open to anyone residing within their domains. This was heavily emphasized by all administrators – Maronite, Druze, and Shi'i – and party officials with whom the author spoke and was given as an example of their party's high moral ground in contrast with others.⁵³

However, armed partisans acting as surrogate police forces in all regions enforced regulations and codes established by the service institutions, and working relations between political and service wings were highly coordinated. Thus, political mileage was made from most projects and services. For instance, when it was decided to dig wells and install generators in seven state schools that had no water in the Dahiya, Hizballah's student recruitment office arranged for volunteer help. In another instance, when Reconstruction Campaign began work on schools,

52. An inquiry in 1992 revealed that on 7 October of that year Hizballah sought a share of the medicines contributed by the Italian government. Contacts with Haj Shami, Hizballah's social services director in Hart Harayk, revealed that since that time the Party of God has been a regular recipient of international aid allotted to the Shi'i community. In addition, some of the municipal councils in which Hizballah members or sympathizers play important roles also receive USAID funds.

53. Hizballah's Haj Shami stressed in his interview with this author that Islam made no distinctions between people and served all equally. Zuhayr Obeidi, Hizballah's successful Beirut candidate in the parliamentary election of 30 August, emphasized Hizballah's openness by the fact that the party interacts with all parts of Lebanese society in the health, social and educational fields. *Al-Safir*, 2 September 1992, p. 2.

Hizballah arranged for parental assistance.⁵⁴ Coordination between the Martyr's Foundation, Hizballah and Reconstruction Campaign follow a similar pattern today. Hizballah determines the legitimacy of the families' housing needs and, if required, arranges the necessary property transactions. Funds from the Martyr's Foundation are used for the land acquisitions and Reconstruction Campaign then draws up the plans and builds the desired structure.

As already noted, the Islamic Movement's agricultural projects in the Bekaa are heavily overlaid with religious significance and were presented by Reconstruction Campaign's director, Sultan As'ad, as a religious duty that links the renewal of the earth to the needs of Muslim people. Numerous giant portraits of Ayatollah Khomeini, his successor Ali Khameneh'i and Husayn al-Musawi, as well as a large model of Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock at the entrance of the city of Baalbek emphasize the locale's Islamic identity.⁵⁵ It is significant, however, that Hizballah's radio 'Voice of the Dispossessed' (*sawt al-mustad'afin*) which was opened in 1986 in the Bekaa, and the 'Voice of Faith' (*sawt al-iman*) begun a year later in Beirut, did not link the Islamic Movement to any one locale as other stations do. As Sayyid Fadlallah has emphasized, there are dispossessed in Akkar, the Chouf and Kisrawan as well as in the South and the Bekaa, and Islam is a universal religion that cares for all people.

It is clear that identification with territory was widespread in Lebanon during the war and continues very strongly today in the places that are involved in the national resistance. Michel Seurat noted a similar tendency to idealize space in his study of a Sunni Muslim popular quarter in Tripoli. Over time, Bab Tabanne had become *terra sancta* for the young militiamen who defended the area and resided there. He observed that the locale had acquired a pure Islamic image as it awaited the wider triumph of Islam in Lebanon.⁵⁶

The institutions originally created to carry out basic public services in times of crisis were also set to work on projects that specifically reinforced primordial communal attachments. For instance, before 1982 there were only three theological schools in Shi'i areas. Since then, Reconstruction Campaign has built several new

54. See the director's report, *Al-Masih al-am li ihtiyājāt al-madāris al-rasmiyya fī al-Dāhiya al-Janūbiyya* (Beirut, February 1992).

55. This is probably an idea imported from Iran, for a model of the Dome of the Rock was placed shortly after the revolution at the centre of Teheran's Palestine Square, not far from the building that had housed the diplomatic mission of Israel under the Shah and that was handed over to the PLO in 1979.

56. Michel Seurat, 'Le quartier de Bâb Tebbâne à Tripoli (Liban). Étude d'une 'asabiyya urbaine', in his *L'Etat de Barbarie* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1989), pp. 110–70. Seurat was one of the French hostages and was killed in 1986.

institutions where young people are being schooled in the Khomeini tradition of liberation Shi'ism.⁵⁷

In the past seven years, Amal has also been involved in school construction in the Bekaa, but its concern is with state schools. According to Muhammad Ubayd, president of the party's external affairs bureau, 33 state schools have been completed in the region through the efforts of the ministry of the South. Faced with this activity, the PSP, which had previously opened four schools in the area, decided to cease this work.⁵⁸

From among the former major militias, the construction of religious buildings currently seems to be the province of the Islamic Movement. New mosques and *husayniyyas* such as the one begun in the Nuwayri sector of west Beirut, plus visits to holy shrines and trips to Iran offered to members of Hizballah, are important efforts to revitalize the Muslim faith in Shi'i regions.

Taken as a whole, the wide range of social action Maronite, Druze and Shi'i organizations promoted emphasizes the political meaning of the locales they served. Indeed, depending on the political programme involved, some institutions and activities were tailored to illustrate deliberate models of the new republic the planners hoped would arise in the aftermath of the civil war. Those who envisioned the most radical changes – the Lebanese Forces and the Islamic Movement – went farthest along this road in programme depth, variety and resource expenditure. This was because both were militantly advancing civilizing causes: one the Christian cultural mission and the other a revitalized Islam. Both were part of broad, dynamic international movements that had important regional and global implications. Islamists were engaged in a long-term campaign begun before 1975 to win over the Shi'i community and then the rest of the nation to Islam. Their wider causes were based on religious conviction and greatly influenced the vigour with which they undertook social action, which explains the stronger efforts they made to let services and programmes stand for fundamental goals.

Since Hizballah contested parliamentary elections in 1992, it has significantly de-emphasized its goal of establishing an Islamic republic in Lebanon. Its top leaders are vigorously pursuing efforts to explain Islam, to create linkages with other political forces and social groups, and to stress the party's commitment to peaceful coexistence under the political and demographic circumstances prevailing in Lebanon.

57. See Chapter 10 for a discussion of the new *hawzas*.

58. Interview with Doreid Yaghi, vice president of PSP international affairs, 12 July 1992, Beirut.

CONCLUSION

While demonstrating that the behaviour of the two Shi'i parties fell within certain organizational trends, in this chapter I have sought to highlight the aspects of social and public services that distinguished Hizballah's behaviour and output from those of other Lebanese parties. We saw that Hizballah's social and public services stand out because of their scope and continuous expansion. The differences in locale, population size, and human and physical developmental levels shaped and set limits to what was possible in terms of social assistance and service programmes. The Shi'i community was disadvantaged in all of these attributes compared with the Druze and Maronites. This explains why social action, with its link to Islam, was an important agent of political mobilization as early as Musa Sadr's arrival in Lebanon in 1959 and remains a critical part of the still ongoing Shi'i awakening.

I also pointed out that the two Shi'i parties – Amal and Hizballah – differed from one other in their social and public assistance programmes, for this might be expected to have a considerable impact on the political fortunes of these organizations. The reasons for Amal's relative weakness in the social services field are apparent when it is compared with parties that successfully fielded large-scale service operations. As a broad, popular movement rather than a structured political party, Amal lacked the administrative wherewithal to raise funds or create institutions to address the enormous problems of its domains. Thus, the Council of the South was, and remains, enormously important to the movement. However, Hizballah's significant expansion into the South, as seen by the results of the municipal elections of 1998 and 2004, are further encouraging Nabih Berri to re-evaluate the political role of public services and to push for Amal's political and administrative overhaul. For Hizballah, the existence of multiple groups with a variety of funding was particularly important between 1982 and 1988 because it was hard to define exactly who or what Hizballah was. Now that it has publicly emerged as a unified movement, the segmentation and specialization of social institutions is no less important. With Reconstruction Campaign having registered Islamic welfare agencies, including a building firm, as Lebanese charitable associations, it would be difficult for the government to move against them should it wish to undercut a major source of Hizballah's popularity. According to Haj Shami, however, such a move is unlikely given the amount and vital importance of the work Hizballah is still doing.

As we have seen, part of the Islamic party's success was and is due to tight institutional organization and the capacity to recruit the skilled and dedicated directors and staff members necessary to administer its varied programmes. On a lower level there appears to be no dearth of volunteers willing to undertake the multiple tasks – some of them dirty and dangerous – that are still needed in deprived Shi'i areas. While these are tremendous assets for any party, the efficient exploitation of

local skilled and unskilled manpower to accomplish a wide variety of public and social services in *different regions* would nevertheless have been impossible without Iran's massive support. It is worth emphasizing the latter point. For instance, while the Druze PSP and the Lebanese Forces were primarily concerned with their coreligionists in two or three districts in one province – Mount Lebanon – and Amal focused largely on the South, Hizballah, with Iranian aid, was able first to establish social and public services in the Bekaa–Hermel province, and then to extend them to 500,000 residents in the capital's southern suburbs. Today these services are also increasingly extended to southern villages that have been considered Nabih Berri's stamping grounds. Reconstruction Campaign has restored thousands of war-damaged or totally destroyed dwellings in the South and continues to do so when Israeli cross-border shelling damages homes and businesses. No other Lebanese party besides Hizballah has been able to continue as well as constantly expand the scale and scope of its wartime welfare activities.

The Iran–Hizballah partnership has produced large political dividends for the Lebanese party, for it permitted it to become a major patron in a country where patron–client relationships constitute the underlying exchange pattern. For instance, funds available to Hizballah have produced jobs for the educated unemployed in party-run or managed bureaux, clinics and hospitals; others seeking work find it in the many party-sponsored construction or clean-up units. These employees, in the Lebanese tradition, reward their benefactors with votes at election time. Those on the receiving end of Hizballah's services express their thanks in similar fashion. Hizballah's accomplishments in the political arena well illustrate this point. Running on the party's resistance efforts and its welfare record, Hizballah members and list mates won seats that have allowed the formation of the largest party bloc in the 128-seat legislative chamber in all postwar elections to date. In addition, the Party of God made impressive gains in the municipal elections of 2004 in the South and once again its lists swept the Dahiya and Bekaa–Hermel local election. While Hizballah's support certainly rests in good part on its resistance activities, the social and public services it offers the public, with the assistance of Iran, allow the party to offer continuous large-scale community services that bolster its image and integrity and reap electoral rewards.

Evidence of increased social activities by both Amal and Hizballah and, where possible, in each other's domains, leads to the conclusion that success in the Lebanese Shi'i power struggle depends on which competitor can most widely mobilize the large Shi'i sub-proletariat. The fundamental issue in today's economically depressed Lebanon is: what does each movement have to offer? According to Hizballah officials, a major asset is their steady, patient, reliable work in a country with a government of big talk and little action. To some extent, this was what all the large-scale social assistance operations offered during the war

years. However, days of hardship and uncertainty continue to vex life in the Shi'i community and pose huge economic and social problems for the postwar government. A decade after the theoretical end of the civil war, the Lebanese state finds itself mired down in the reconstruction of Beirut's commercial centre and repairing the capital's ravaged telephone, electricity and water infrastructure. The worsening economic situation today therefore all but guarantees continued disregard of the basic needs of most of the country's outlying regions such as the South and the Bekaa. It is in this context that the socio-political impact of the massive programmes Hizballah began during the war years, and that are today continuing and expanding rather than contracting, can best be estimated. Given this situation, Hizballah's social and public services are far from redundant and should continue to gain the Islamists goodwill and votes in the years to come.

12

Iran and Lebanon after Khomeini

H. E. Chehabi

The year 1989 was a turning point for both Iran and Lebanon. On 3 June 1989 Khomeini died. Iran's president, Ali Khameneh'i, succeeded Ruhollah Khomeini as supreme leader and in August Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani assumed the presidency, whose powers were increased in the course of a constitutional revision. On 25 October members of Lebanon's parliament reached agreement in the Saudi Arabian city of Ta'if over a reform of their country's political order that enhanced the power of Sunni Muslims but kept a weakened presidency reserved for a Maronite. This paved the way for an end to the civil war, which came when, in exchange for Syria's participation in the anti-Iraqi coalition created after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Syria was allowed to crush the forces of General Michel Aoun, who had resisted the implementation of the Ta'if Agreement.¹ In both Iran and Lebanon, therefore, the beginning of the new decade coincided with the birth of what some called 'second republics'.²

At the Ta'if conference, which began its meetings on 29 September 1989, a number of Arab governments were represented, but Iran had not been invited –

1. Marie-Joëlle Zahar, 'Peace by Unconventional Means: Lebanon's Ta'if Agreement', in Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild and Elizabeth M. Cousens, eds, *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp. 567–697.
2. Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *After Khomeini: The Iranian Second Republic* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995) and Kail C. Ellis, ed., *Lebanon's Second Republic: Prospects for the Twenty-first Century* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2002). With the benefit of hindsight one can say that in Iran, as a result of the elimination of the office of prime minister, a triumvirate was replaced by a duumvirate (supreme leader and president), while in Lebanon the strengthening of the office of speaker of parliament (a gesture to the Shi'is) led to the substitution of a triumvirate for the old duumvirate (president and prime minister).

despite and because of its deep involvement in Lebanese affairs. The Iranian government was worried about the future of Hizballah and the prospects for the struggle against Israel, and the foreign minister Ali-Akbar Velayati stated at a press conference on 4 October that Iran was not optimistic, adding that since a majority of Lebanese were Muslims, government should be in their hands as well. The next day Rafsanjani told a visiting delegation of Lebanese and Palestinians that if Muslims at Ta'if voted in favour of Maronites, they would commit an act of treason against the 'Muslim Nation of Lebanon'.³ Ironically, this put Iran in the same camp as Iraq, which also opposed Ta'if on the grounds that it left Syria's domination in Lebanon intact.

Official Iranian hardline rhetoric notwithstanding, Rafsanjani was in fact a pragmatist who realized that Iranians in their majority were tired of the deprivations caused by revolution and war and held its rulers responsible for the less than favourable outcome of the war with Iraq, which could have been ended on much better terms in 1982 when Iraqi forces had been expelled from most of Iranian territory and some Arab states had offered to pay reparations to Iran. It was Rafsanjani pushing for Iranian acceptance of UN resolution 598 that paved the way for the cease-fire. After the end of the war, the chief aim of Rafsanjani, who was by now running foreign policy, was to gain a favourable outcome in the negotiations with Iraq, which was in a much better bargaining position on account of its cordial relations with the West.⁴

As Rafsanjani settled into the presidency the Iranian regime became less repressive domestically, while internationally it adopted a less confrontational policy: henceforth, Iranian foreign policy was to serve Iran's national interest rather than to export the revolution, and Iran's national interest demanded accommodation with the rest of the world. Within Iran's ruling elite many opposed this new pragmatism. When Khomeini was alive he had been the ultimate arbiter in factional disputes, which enabled the government to speak more or less with one voice.⁵ With his passing, however, factional disputes became more open. Three factions emerged in Iran's leadership: conservative hardliners around Khameneh'i, centrist pragmatists around Rafsanjani, and radical hardliners, which included men like Ali-Akbar Mohtashami who had been instrumental in founding Hizballah.⁶ In the

3. Mas'ūd Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvamat tā pīrūzī: Tārīkhchah-yi hizb allāh-i Lubnān 1361-1379* (Teheran: Mu'assasa-yi mu'ālī'āt va taḥqīqāt-i andīshah sāzān-i Nūr, 1379/2000), pp. 121-3.

4. Kaveh Afrasiabi, *After Khomeini: New Directions in Iran's Foreign Policy* (Boulder: Westview, 1994), p. 58.

5. See Maziar Behrooz, 'Factionalism in Iran under Khomeini', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 27:4 (October 1991): 597-614.

6. See Chapter 9, pp. 217-20.

immediate aftermath of Khomeini's death, the first two allied against the radicals, who dominated the third Majles (1988-92).⁷ The radicals had accepted the cease-fire with Iraq grudgingly⁸ and opposed strengthening the presidency.⁹ Rafsanjani lost no time in subduing the radical hardliners. When he presented his cabinet to parliament in August 1989 Mohtashami was no longer minister of the interior, despite a petition signed by 138 deputies urging the president to retain him. Mohtashami's main allies in the ministry of foreign affairs, Hosein Sheikholeslam and Javad Mansuri, were demoted.¹⁰ In 1990 Mohtashami (along with other radicals) was further humiliated by being deemed insufficiently proficient in Islamic knowledge to stand in elections for the Assembly of Experts, which is elected every eight years and chooses the supreme leader.¹¹ Finally, when legislative elections were held in 1992, the pragmatists and conservatives connived to exclude most radicals, so Mohtashami could not stand for re-election.¹² Radicals would re-enter parliament only in 1996. The factionalism in Iran also affected its Lebanon policy and complicated efforts to get the Western hostages in Lebanon freed.

FREEING THE HOSTAGES

As we saw in Chapter 9, in 1985 and 1986 some of Iran's leaders had begun to

7. See Sussan Siavoshi, 'Factionalism and Iranian Politics: The Post-Khomeini Experience', *Iranian Studies*, 25:3-4 (1992): 27-50. For a conceptualization of Iranian factionalism, see Mehdi Moslem, 'The State and Factional Politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran', in Eric Hoogland, ed., *Twenty Years of Islamic Revolution: Political and Social Transformation in Iran since 1979* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), pp. 19-35.
8. R. K. Ramazani, 'Iran's Foreign Policy: Contending Orientations', in R. K. Ramazani, ed., *Iran's Revolution: The Search for Consensus* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 62.
9. Shireen T. Hunter, 'Iran from the 1988 Cease-Fire to the 1992 Elections', in Robert O. Freedman, ed., *The Middle East after Iraq's Invasion* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), p. 192.
10. Magnus Ranstorp, 'Hizbollah's Command Leadership: Its Structure, Decision-Making and Relationship with Iranian Clergy and Institutions', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 6:3 (Autumn 1994): 319-20. In 1979 Sheikholeslam had been one of the hostage takers at the US embassy in Teheran.
11. For details, see Mehdi Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), pp. 156-9.
12. For the full story of Rafsanjani's outmanoeuvring of the radicals see Bahman Baktiari, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran: The Institutionalization of Factional Politics* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1996), pp. 184-91. See also David Menashri, 'The Domestic Power Struggle and the Fourth Majlis Elections', *Orient*, 33:3 (1992): 387-408.

make deals with the United States, as a result of which arms were delivered to Iran in exchange for three American hostages, but these contacts ended when Iranian hardliners leaked news of them to a Lebanese journal. In January 1989, President George Bush announced in his inaugural speech that 'goodwill would beget goodwill'. Teheran's pragmatist newspapers urged the government to adopt a new approach towards the United States.¹³ The secretary-general of the United Nations, Javier Pérez de Cuellar, decided to use his office to mediate in the hostage affair, and appointed an Italian diplomat, Giandomenico Picco, as negotiator.¹⁴ A month after Khomeini's death, the Iranian foreign minister, Ali-Akbar Velayati, declared in Geneva that Iran was willing to begin *pourparlers*.¹⁵ But before these could begin, a crisis arose: on 28 July Israeli commandos abducted Shaykh Abdul Karim Obeid, one of the leaders of Hizballah, and two of his aides, killing a bystander in the process. This was to gain the freedom of Ron Arad, an Israeli airman captured in October 1986 when his military jet was shot down over Lebanese territory.¹⁶ In retaliation for the abduction of Obeid, Hizballah killed Colonel William R. Higgins, a US hostage,¹⁷ and threatened to kill another one, Joseph Cicippio, if Israel did not release Obeid. The United States let it be known that it held Iran responsible for Cicippio's life, which was spared through Iranian efforts.¹⁸

When Rafsanjani assumed the Iranian presidency on 3 August 1989 there were still at least 23 Western hostages in captivity in Lebanon. On 8 August Fadlallah declared publicly that Hizballah was ready to free the hostages and a few days later Rafsanjani began telling visitors that Iran was willing to use its influence in Lebanon to help in this matter.¹⁹ Picco became active in Lebanon and negotiated

13. Nader Entessar, 'Realpolitik and Transformation of Iran's Foreign Policy: Coping with the "Iran Syndrome"', in Hamid Zanganeh, ed., *Islam, Iran and World Stability* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 145–6.

14. Picco had played a key role in the negotiations leading to the cease-fire between Iraq and Iran, which had earned him the confidence of the Iranian leadership. See Giandomenico Picco, *Man without a Gun: One Diplomat's Secret Struggle to Free the Hostages, Fight Terrorism, and End a War* (New York: Times Books, 1999), pp. 56–96.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

16. Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 28 and 36.

17. On his abduction see Jaber, *Hezbollah*, pp. 36–7 and Augustus Richard Norton, 'Walking between Raindrops: Hizballah in Lebanon', *Mediterranean Politics*, 3:1 (Summer 1998): 92.

18. Hunter, 'Iran from the 1988 Cease-Fire to the 1992 Elections', p. 194.

19. Picco, *Man without a Gun*, pp. 102 and 110. The president of Turkey, Turgut Özal, and the Japanese prime minister also urged the Iranian government to help with the Western hostages. Mas'ūd Safīrī, *Ḥaḳīqathā va maṣliḥathā: Guftugū bā Hāshimī Rafsanjānī* (Teheran: Nashr-i Nay, 1378/1999), p. 61.

with the hostage takers. It appeared to him that the Iranians did not have full control over those who held the hostages, reflecting divisions within both the Iranian leadership and Hizballah.²⁰ A senior official in the Iranian government corroborated this view and told a British journalist: 'It isn't enough for us to tell them what they must do – release this hostage, or another one. We have to persuade them that we are not being weak, and that they will get some advantage out of it. These people are Shi'i, yes; but they are also Lebanese. They do not give up something in exchange for nothing.'²¹

One event that hastened the release of the hostages was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990: in the capital the invading troops opened the gates of the prison in which the Da'wa members, whose imprisonment had occasioned the kidnappings in Lebanon, had been kept, and they managed to flee. Their release had been a demand of the hostage takers, who were now more willing to part with their prisoners.²²

One after the other Western hostages were released, as Iran reportedly paid their abductors with money and materiel. In the course of negotiations with France, Imad Mughniyya demanded the liberation of Anis Naccache and his accomplices in return for the French hostages, and on the Iranian side Mohsen Rafiqdust, minister of Revolutionary Guards until 1988, negotiated with the French on Naccache's behalf. President François Mitterrand pardoned Naccache and his men in 1990, and they were immediately flown to Teheran. In exchange, Iranian assets in France were unfrozen and spare parts for armaments were sent.²³ Throughout the negotiations, the Iranians asked for the release of the four Iranians kidnapped by the Lebanese Forces in 1982, but were told that they had been killed.²⁴

The radical hardliners in Iran disagreed with this policy of opening up to the West. Mohtashami, ousted from power but a member of parliament as of 1989, became a vocal critic of the government, and came publicly to deplore both Iran's neutrality in the Gulf War and the liberation of the British hostages in Lebanon while the Iranians were still in detention.²⁵ After being ousted from the ruling circles he started a monthly magazine, *Bayan*, which featured a number of articles

20. Picco, *Man without a Gun*, pp. 122–3.

21. John Simpson and Tira Shubart, *Lifting the Veil: Life in Revolutionary Iran* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), p. 106.

22. Picco, *Man without a Gun*, pp. 124–5.

23. Jean-Yves Chaperon and Jean-Noël Tournier, *Enquête sur l'assassinat de Chapour Bakhtiar* (Paris: Edition1, 1992), pp. 202–3 and 259–60; and Jaber, *Hezbollah*, pp. 112 and 126–7.

24. Picco, *Man without a Gun*, p. 171. For the full story of these Iranians see Chapter 9, pp. 213–15.

25. *FBIS-NES-90-220*, 14 November 1990, p. 57.

on Lebanon that were critical of the Iranian government. It is noteworthy that, in interviews, Hizballah officials always sidestepped loaded questions aimed to get them to criticize Iran's diminishing revolutionary fervour. The first question in an interview with a 'commander of Islamic Resistance' identified only as Abu Shahid, was about the hostages. Abu Shahid's answer:

For many brethren the point of taking the hostages was to fight against world arrogance and its leader, America. ... The basic aim was to demolish the myth of the West and America. The dispossessed (*mustaq'afun*) of the world learnt the courage for this from Imam [Khomeini]. The hostage movement has accomplished most of its goals. ... Its greatest accomplishment was breaking the awe that America inspired, ... because many people in the world feared America and did not dare struggle against it, but the decision [to take the hostages] broke that fear. ... Freeing the hostages may upset some brethren, but they all know that the Supreme Leader supervises the matter, and they all obey him.²⁶

The ultimate release of all Western hostages failed to bring about the anticipated *rapprochement* between Iran and the West. The United States has been blamed for not reciprocating Rafsanjani's efforts, but insisting that one deserves no reward for doing what is right. However, there were other obstacles to improved relations with the West, most importantly the Iranian government's refusal to retract Khomeini's call, issued in February 1989, for the death of Salman Rushdie,²⁷ the continued support for Palestinian hardliners²⁸ and a series of assassinations of Iranian oppositionists in Europe. All three policies had a Hizballah connection.

In the above-mentioned interview, Abu Shahid was asked what Hizballah had done to carry out Khomeini's fatwa. He answered that he did not think it had been the imam's aim to pit Muslims against the person of Salman Rushdie, as others had written blasphemous things before Rushdie. According to Abu Shahid, Khomeini had wanted to reveal the anti-Islamic face of world arrogance, and he expressed his

26. 'Muqāvat-i islāmī mazlūm ammā pāydār', *Bayān*, 3 (Murdād 1369/July–August 1990): 61.
27. See Myron Rezun, 'The Internal Struggle, the Rushdie Affair and the Prospects for the Future', in Myron Rezun, ed., *Iran at the Crossroads: Global Relations in a Turbulent Decade* (Boulder: Westview, 1989), pp. 201–18; Ramine Kamrane, *La fatwa contre Rushdie: une interprétation stratégique* (Paris: Kimé, 1997); and Mehdi Mozaffari, *Fatwa: Violence and Discourtesy* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998).
28. On which see Hunter, 'Iran from the 1988 Cease-Fire', pp. 201–3; and Meir Hatina, 'Iran and the Palestinian Islamic movement', *Orient*, 38:1 (1997): 107–20.

confidence that after the Imam's death the Lebanese would make greater efforts to carry out the fatwa. Asked what Hizballah had done concretely to eliminate Salman Rushdie, he answered that some action had taken place and pointed out that one member of the Islamic Resistance, Mustafa Mazeh, had been martyred in London.²⁹ On the Palestinian issue, Abu Shahid boasted that Hizballah had planned and supervised two Palestinian actions against Israel, and urged Iran to continue its vital role as 'coordinator' and 'organizer' of anti-Israeli Palestinian actions carried out by Ahmad Jibril's group and Islamic Jihad.³⁰

Hizballah members were also involved in the last of a series of attacks on Iranian opposition figures in Europe. Until 1989 official Iranian policy towards critics abroad might have been summarized as 'who is not with us is against us,' but with Rafsanjani this became 'who is not against us is with us.' This more liberal attitude excluded those who had taken up arms against the state or had accepted Iraqi aid during the Iran/Iraq war. In July 1989, Abdorrahman Qasemlu, secretary-general of the Kurdish Democratic Party-Iran, which had been waging a largely unsuccessful guerrilla war against the central government, was assassinated with two of his aides in Vienna, but the presumed assassins, all connected with the Pasdaran and Iranian intelligence, carried diplomatic passports and had to be given safe passage to Iran.³¹ In April 1990, Kazem Rajavi, the brother of Mas'ud Rajavi, the leader of the Mojahedin, was killed in Switzerland. After the KDP-I and the Mojahedin, it was the turn of the National Movement of Resistance of Iran, the organization led by the Shah's last prime minister, Shapur Bakhtiar. The NMRI received money from Iraq and Saudi Arabia until the late 1980s, but by the early 1990s it was moribund. In April 1991 its second-in-command, Abdorrahman Borumand, was assassinated in Paris, and in August 1991 Bakhtiar himself was murdered, together with his secretary, at his home near Paris.³² Finally, in September 1992 a meeting of mostly Kurdish Iranian oppositionists at the Mykonos restaurant in Berlin was assaulted and four participants were killed, including Qasemlu's successor, Sadeq Sharafkandi; all four had attended a meeting of the Socialist International in Berlin. According to the official report of Germany's Federal Agency for the Defence of the Constitution (*Bundesamt für Verfassungs-*

29. Mazeh was killed when the bomb he was making with which to kill Rushdie exploded in his hotel room in Paddington on 3 August 1989. Subsequently, the inhabitants of the Caspian village of Kiapey invited his parents to live in Kiapey. <http://www.gazette.de/Archiv/Gazette-8-November1998/Netticker.html>
30. 'Muqāvat-i islāmī': 62–3.
31. See Nader Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992), pp. 41–3.
32. Chaperon and Tournier, *Enquête sur l'assassinat de Chapour Bakhtiar*, pp. 31–8 and 62–82.

schutz), an Iranian and three Lebanese perpetrated the murders. The Iranian had been a member of Pasdaran, had organized Jerusalem Day marches in Bonn and had acted as a liaison to Hizballah's operatives in Germany. The three Lebanese were all known to be active members of Hizballah. One managed to return to Lebanon but the three other culprits, plus two Lebanese accomplices, were arrested.³³ The Iranian government denied all involvement, but the minister of intelligence, Ho. Ali Fallahian, gloated at a press conference that decisive blows had been dealt to the Kurdish opposition. The German government entered negotiations with Iran and, at one point, attempted to broker a deal that would have exchanged the five prisoners for Ron Arad, but the judiciary insisted on trying the accused. After a long trial, in April 1997 the court in Berlin found Khameneh'i, Rafsanjani, Velayati and Fallahian guilty of ordering the assassinations. Of the assassination commando itself, the Iranian and one Lebanese were condemned to life imprisonment, two Lebanese were given 11-year gaol sentences, and one was acquitted. In reaction to this verdict, all European Union states withdrew their ambassadors from Teheran.³⁴ In September, a German businessman was arrested in Iran. He was condemned to death on charges of adultery and spying, but freed in 2000 – just before a state visit by President Khatami to Germany.³⁵

HIZBALLAH'S 'LEBANONIZATION'

The new thinking in Iranian foreign policy after the acceptance of the cease-fire with Iraq in 1988 also affected relations with allies in Lebanon. Both Shamseddin and Fadlallah publicly welcomed the end of the war and Nabih Berri pointedly wondered why the great powers insisted on implementing that resolution but not resolution 425, which ten years earlier had called for Israeli withdrawal from

33. This report is reprinted in *Der Fall 'Mykonos'*, vol. 4 (Berlin: Komitee der iranischen Opposition im Exil gegen Terror, 1995), pp. 23–30. The German federal prosecutor's statement of charges (reprinted in *ibid.*, pp. 51–93) provides details on the accused: the four Lebanese were all Shi'is, came from poor backgrounds, had militated in a variety of organizations (including Amal and the PLO), had entered Germany illegally and then proceeded to live off welfare.
34. Wilfried Buchta, *Who Rules Iran? The Structure of Power in the Islamic Republic* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2000), p. 128.
35. The Mykonos trial continued to affect German–Iranian relations. When a commemorative plaque was unveiled near the Mykonos restaurant by the Berlin municipality in 2004, the Iranian government protested and put up a plaque close to the German embassy in Teheran that chastises Germany for the delivery of chemicals by German companies to Iraq for the manufacturing of chemical weapons during the Iran/Iraq war.

Lebanon.³⁶ But beneath the approval at least some Lebanese Shi'is felt disappointment. The whole purpose of carrying the war into Iraq in 1982 had been to overthrow Saddam Hussein and establish an Islamic regime in Iraq. Now that that goal had been abandoned, how reasonable was it to expect Iranian support for the creation of an Islamic republic in Lebanon? Iran's new policy, which subordinated the Lebanon dossier to Iran's overall foreign policy interests, apparently produced some confusion within Hizballah and, prompted by Fadlallah, a debate ensued within the party about 'Lebanonity'.³⁷

In Lebanon, Amal and Hizballah were still fighting. Exasperated, Rafsanjani condemned both sides and made overtures to Amal in 1989 but, despite Nabih Berri's attendance at Khomeini's funeral ceremonies in June, not much came of this initiative.³⁸ Amal was an ally of the Syrians, who would not brook too close relations between Amal and the Iranian government. For better or worse, Iranians had to work with Hizballah and Hizballah had to work with Iran.

While the Ta'if conference was still in session, Hizballah held a secret conclave in Iran in October 1989. It appears that two factions emerged at this meeting. One led by Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayli (born in 1948), S. Abbas al-Musawi (1952–92) and S. Husayn al-Musawi, and encouraged by Fadlallah, was willing to follow Rafsanjani's lead and adopt a more pragmatic attitude. The other comprising S. Hasan Nasrallah, S. Ibrahim al-Amin and Imad Mughniyya advocated continuing *jihad*. It was the latter faction that held the Western hostages in Lebanon, but it was the former faction that emerged victorious.³⁹

That former Da'wa members such as al-Tufayli and Fadlallah should have been more inclined to accommodate Rafsanjani downplaying Shi'i internationalism is only an apparent paradox. The Da'wa contained an undercurrent of what one might call Arabocentrism,⁴⁰ and therefore a reorientation of Hizballah in the light of the post-Ta'if reconstitution of the Lebanese state was not a logical inconsistency.

36. *FBIS-NES-88-139*, 20 July 1988, p. 43; *FBIS-NES-88-140*, 21 July 1988, p. 35; and *FBIS-NES-88-142*, 25 July 1988, p. 32.
37. *FBIS-NES-88-185*, 23 September 1988, p. 33.
38. Augustus Richard Norton, 'Lebanon: The Internal Conflict and the Iranian Connection', in John L. Esposito, ed., *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1990), p. 132.
39. The account of the Hizballah meeting in Teheran is from A. Nizar Hamzeh and R. Hrair Dekmejian, 'The Islamic Spectrum of Lebanese Politics', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 16:3 (Spring 1993): 38–9. They base their information on an article in *al-Hayāt*, 27 October 1989, p. 6. According to a different account, Tufayli was close to Mohtashami and in fact resented Rafsanjani's policies. Ranstorp, 'Hizballah's Command Leadership': 312–15.
40. I prefer this term rather than 'Arab nationalism', which has a secular connotation.

In November Hizballah held its first congress in Baalbek and on that occasion Subhi al-Tufayli was elected secretary-general. After the installation of the pro-Syrian president Elias Hrawi in November 1989, and in the face of Iranian intransigence, the Syrian authorities tightened the flow of Iranian Pasdaran and weapons to Lebanon.⁴¹ But in 1990 the Iranian government gave up its active opposition to the Ta'if Agreement and established more cordial relations with the Lebanese government, paralleling Hizballah's *rapprochement* with the Lebanese government. In late October 1990 Hizballah began to negotiate with the Lebanese government about redeploying troops in areas under Hizballah control as part of the disarmament of the militias, and in November the Iranian chargé d'affaires joined other diplomats in a reception given by President Hrawi on the occasion of Lebanon's Independence Day, which was interpreted as signifying the Iranian government's decision to consider the Lebanese state legitimate.⁴² In an act symbolizing the new triangular relationship between the Lebanese state, Hizballah and Iran, in August 1991 Hizballah handed back to the army the Shaykh Abdallah barracks, which had been the headquarters of the Pasdaran since 1983.⁴³

In April 1991 Abbas al-Musawi was elected second secretary-general of Hizballah at the party's second congress.⁴⁴ At this congress Hizballah officially gave up its opposition to the Ta'if Agreement and, as political life revived in Lebanon, decided to participate actively in it. The new secretary-general tried to come to a *modus vivendi* with Amal, of which he had once been a member. Syria brokered an agreement between the two Shi'i groups whereby Nabih Berri would become speaker of parliament and Hizballah would be allowed to keep an armed presence in the South: in July 1991 armed action against Israeli occupiers and their local allies of the South Lebanon Army in Israel's 'Security Zone' recommenced. Inside Hizballah relatively moderate elements were clearly gaining the upper hand, a development that paralleled Rafsanjani's ascendancy and Mohtashami's gradual marginalization in Iran.⁴⁵ This poses the question of a causal connection between the two, for it has often been argued that it was Rafsanjani's turn to *realpolitik* that caused Hizballah's accommodation to post-Ta'if realities. The fact is that both developments owed much to the new situation created by the Soviet Union's defeat in the cold war and the United States' emergence as the sole superpower. This left

41. Dr Mahmud A. Faksh, 'The Shi'a Community of Lebanon: A New Assertive Political Force', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 14:3 (Spring 1991): 54–5.

42. 'Hizb A ... va shirkat dar kābīnah-yi Lubnān', *Bayān*, 7 (Ādhar 1369/November–December 1990): 95.

43. Jaber, *Hezbollah*, p. 108.

44. For his biography see Stephan Rosiny, *Islamismus bei den Schiiten im Libanon* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1996), pp. 149–53.

45. Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbullah*, pp. 46–7.

both Syria and Iran in a weaker position *vis-à-vis* the West and forced both regimes as well as Hizballah to decelerate their challenge to Western interests in the region. Sayyid Fadlallah said as much in an interview with Mohtashami's monthly publication. When the interviewer pointed out that Iran's shift from a revolutionary policy to diplomatic deal-making had forced Hizballah to become more flexible, he first gave a detailed analysis of Lebanon's importance to the West and to the Arab world and concluded:

In my opinion the decrease in revolutionary dynamism [in Lebanon] has little to do with the present state of Iran and Syria. The fact of the matter is that the current situation in the region does not allow Syria and Iran to show more dynamism. Although they may have the necessary forces and possibilities, their scope of action has become more limited.⁴⁶

To this geopolitical dimension one must add Iran's financial difficulties after the end of the war with Iraq, which led to cuts in subsidies.

While Hizballah did not abandon the ideal of an Islamic state, it was now argued that, given Lebanon's demographics, the establishment of an Iranian-style system of governance was unfeasible. In the light of the new realism, Hizballah decided to contest the parliamentary elections of the summer of 1992. But before Abbas al-Musawi could lead his party in the campaign, he was killed, along with his wife, son and a few others, by an Israeli air raid on his convoy as he was driving home from a meeting to commemorate the eighth anniversary of the assassination, by an Israeli commando, of Shaykh Raghīb Harb (1952–84).⁴⁷ Two days after Musawi's assassination, S. Hasan Nasrallah (born 1953) was elected secretary-general. On his election he discarded his radical position and adapted to the conciliatory line propounded by Fadlallah.⁴⁸

Hizballah's response to Abbas al-Musawi's assassination was to step up attacks against Israeli forces and the SLA in the 'Security Zone'. Frantic diplomatic

46. 'Allāma Faḍl Allāh: Āmrīkā dar pusht-i tamāmī-yi mushkilāt-i jahān ast', *Bayān*, 11 (Tīr 1370/June–July 1991): 54.

47. Mohtashami commented that al-Musawi had been martyred the day Lebanon's 'dependent' members of parliament had accepted the American Ta'if plan and that the 'infidel and spy' hostages had been freed without any preconditions and for nothing in return, and blamed Iran's diminishing support for Islamic movements and its *rapprochement* with the West for Israel's boldness. *Bayān*, 17–18 (Isfand 1370–Farvardīn 1371/February–April 1992): 20, 57.

48. Rosiny, *Islamismus bei den Schiiten*, pp. 154–6. Possibly in retaliation for the death of Musawi and his family, the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires was bombed in March, killing 28 and injuring over 200.

activity ensued and, after a telephone conversation between Rafsanjani and Hafez al-Assad, representatives of Syria, Iran and Hizballah held a meeting in Beirut and persuaded Hizballah not to attack Israeli positions from areas controlled by the Lebanese army or UNIFIL. Attacks on Israeli positions inside Lebanon (and sometimes in Galilee) continued and on two occasions, in 1993 and 1996 (respectively named 'Operation Accountability' and 'Grapes of Wrath'), Israel retaliated by launching punitive attacks on southern Lebanon. On both occasions the situation was defused by diplomatic means with the help of France, Iran, Syria and the United States. Hizballah's efforts bore fruit in 2000 when the last Israeli occupiers and their SLA allies retreated from Lebanese soil.⁴⁹

THE MARJA'IIYYA

The founding of the Islamic Republic in 1979 politicized the clerical leadership of Twelver Shi'ism and, as one of the sources of emulation (*maraji'*), Ayatollah Khomeini now found himself the 'supreme leader' of Iran. The resulting conundrum of how the authority of the *maraji'* related to that of the supreme leader was never solved and became even more problematic after Khomeini's death in June 1989. In March 1989 Khomeini's designated successor, Ayatollah Hosein Ali Montazeri, had been dismissed and, since none of the remaining *maraji'* shared Khomeini's notion of theocratic governance, the Iranian constitution was changed to allow a lower-ranking cleric to become supreme leader.⁵⁰ The choice fell on Ali Khameneh'i, president since 1981. In subsequent years all the *maraji'* who had attained their status before the revolution died, the last being Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Araki, a relatively unknown cleric who had been Khomeini's teacher and who was chosen by Iran's leaders to inherit his student's purely religious authority. However, he did not acquire much of a following before he died at more than 100 years of age in late 1994. With all the senior figures gone, the Shi'i world faced a crisis of succession as a new generation of ambitious ulema came to the fore.⁵¹

To the extent that they followed a *marja'* at all, Lebanese Shi'is traditionally

49. For details see Augustus Richard Norton, 'Hizballah and the Israeli Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 30:1 (Autumn 2000): 22–35.
50. Montazeri had already been weakened by the Mehdi Hashemi affair (see Chapter 9). After his dismissal he became an advocate of a more democratic understanding of *velayat-e faqih*. For Montazeri's deteriorating relations with the regime, see Wilfried Buchta, *Who Rules Iran*, pp. 92–4.
51. The constitutional changes and their connection with the crisis of succession are discussed in Said Amir Arjomand, 'Authority in Shiism and Constitutional Developments in the Islamic Republic of Iran', in Rainer Brunner and Werner Ende, eds, *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times: Religious Culture and Political History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), pp. 301–32.

followed the *maraji'* of Najaf rather than of Qom – Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim until his death in 1970 and then Ayatollah Abulqasim Khu'i, who died in 1992.⁵² After the Iranian revolution, Amal leaders would often claim to follow Khomeini, as did all Hizballah figures. Sayyid Fadlallah, however, remained faithful to Khu'i whose representative (*wakil*) in Lebanon he had become in 1976.⁵³ Khu'i's death in 1992 occasioned a brief interregnum in which many Shi'is followed Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Golpayegani in Qom, but after his death in 1993 most chose to support the *marja'iiyya* of Ayatollah Ali Sistani in Najaf. Fadlallah, Shameseddin and the Iraqi Baqir al-Hakim signed a petition asking Khameneh'i to recognize Sistani,⁵⁴ but when Araki died in late 1994, the (state-backed) association of Qom seminary teachers issued a statement recommending seven ulema to the public as sources of emulation, including Khameneh'i. Excluded from the list were the *maraji'* of Najaf, most notably Sistani, but also those *maraji'* in Iran who were at odds with the regime and some of whom, like Ayatollah Montazeri, were under house arrest.⁵⁵ This was an attempt to keep the *marja'iiyya* in Iran and to marginalize those *maraji'* who were critical of the regime.

Khameneh'i's attempt to establish himself as a *marja'* met with resistance from senior clerics both within and outside Iran. His scholarship was deemed insufficient and the government's attempt to tell believers what religious authority to follow flew in the face of Twelver Shi'i tradition, according to which the believers choose their source of emulation on the basis of criteria such as learning, piety and righteousness rather than the recommendation of rulers. In the face of this lack of enthusiasm for his *marja'iiyya*, Khameneh'i declared on 14 December 1994 that, given the heavy responsibilities of his position as supreme leader and given the availability of many qualified *marja'*s in Iran, he would not seek that position for believers inside Iran, but added: 'as for the *marja'iiyya* outside the country, it is a

52. Linda S. Walbridge, *Without Forgetting the Imam: Lebanese Shi'ism in an American Community* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), pp. 63–87.
53. The Iraqi scholar Talib Aziz writes that he knows of people whom Fadlallah personally convinced to switch their allegiance from Khomeini to Khu'i. See his 'Fadlallah and the Remaking of the Marja'iiya', in Linda S. Walbridge, ed., *The Most Learned of the Shi'a: The Institution of the Marja' Taqlid* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 215 n21.
54. *Issues*, January 1994, as quoted in Ehteshami, p. 53.
55. See Amnesty International, 'Iran: Human Rights Violations against Shi'a Religious Leaders and their Followers', accessed at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/print/ENGMD130181997>; Wilfried Buchta, 'Die Islamische Republik Iran und die religiös-politische Kontroverse um die marja'iiyat', *Orient*, 36:3 (1995), especially 454–72; and Saskia Gieling, 'The Marja'iiya in Iran and the Nomination of Khamenei in December 1994', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 33:4 (October 1997): 777–87.

totally different case. I accept this responsibility because doing otherwise will be harmful.⁵⁶ What Khameneh'i meant was that given that Shi'is outside Iran lived in a non-revolutionary environment, they needed the option of a revolutionary *marja'*. The secretary-general of Hizballah, S. Hasan Nasrallah, immediately accepted Khameneh'i's *marja'iyya* and in 1995 he became his representative in Lebanon.⁵⁷ But Fadlallah now declared his own *marja'iyya*, arguing that Arab Shi'is needed a leader who spoke their language and was familiar with their world, and Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddin too came to be regarded as a *marja'* by his followers.⁵⁸ In the late 1990s more and more Lebanese Shi'is chose Fadlallah as their source of emulation, and his relations with both Hizballah and Iran cooled down to the point where he has not visited Iran since then.⁵⁹ Fadlallah made inroads in the Lebanese diaspora in Africa, South America and the United States and, as a result, came to dispose of financial resources that allowed him to expand his charitable institutions into a vast network of educational, publishing and charitable organizations independent of Hizballah and of Iranian largess.⁶⁰ While Ayatollah Sistani has become the most widely followed Shi'i *marja'* since the mid-1990s, the very existence of a clerical leadership with supranational reach outside Najaf and Qom is a momentous development and bespeaks the emancipation of Lebanese Shi'ism. Fadlallah's thought on social issues has become markedly more liberal and, perhaps reflecting the realities of Lebanese society, he has espoused relatively progressive positions on women and championed dialogue with Christians and *rapprochement* with Sunnis to the point where he has at times incurred the ire of *maraji'* in Iraq and Iran.⁶¹ However, he is unlikely to generate a following in Iran, for progressive Shi'is there have left the whole institution of the *marja'iyya*

56. IRNA report, 14 December 1994, as reproduced at <http://www.khamenei.de/news/news1994/dec1994.htm>. See entry for 14 December 1994. Accessed on 14 October 2004.

57. *Al-Safir*, 18 May 1995, as quoted in Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvatāt tā pīrūzī*, p. 157.

58. Stephan Rosiny, *Shia's Publishing in Lebanon. With Special Reference to Islamic and Islamist Publications* (Berlin: Verlag Das Arabische Buch, 1999), p. 43.

59. In fact, as early as 1985 Fadlallah subtly hinted that he was an equal of the Iranian clerical leaders rather than a mere follower by pointing out that his relationship with the leaders of Islamic Iran started long before the Islamic revolution and was one of friendship and mutual confidence, adding that he had written books on Islamic thought 25 or 30 years earlier. See his interview in *Middle East Insight*, 4:2 (June–July 1985): 17.

60. Anabelle Böttcher, 'Ayatollah Fadlallāh und seine Wohltätigkeitsorganisation *al-Mabarrāt*', in Rainer Brunner, Monika Gronke, Jens Peter Laut and Ulrich Rebstock, eds, *Islamstudien ohne Ende: Festschrift für Werner Ende zum 65. Geburtstag* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), pp. 41–8.

61. Aziz, 'Fadlallah and the Remaking of the Marja'iya': 208–12 and Stephan Rosiny, 'The Tragedy of Fātima az-Zahrā' in the Debate of two Shi'ite Theologians in Lebanon', in Brunner and Ende, eds, *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times*, pp. 207–19.

behind and are assuming increasingly 'protestant' attitudes, but what with his old connections to the Iraqi Da'wa, he may yet play a role in post-Ba'athist Iraq.⁶²

KHATAMI AND LEBANON

As Hizballah became a major player in Lebanese politics and achieved electoral successes, politics in Iran also became more animated. By the mid-1990s tensions had appeared in the alliance between Rafsanjani's centrists and Khameneh'i's conservatives, so the former began a *rapprochement* with the radicals, who had been marginalized from 1989 to 1992. Most of these radicals had by now become more liberal, partly because they had personally experienced the regime's illiberal policies and partly because of the fall of communism, which seemed to demonstrate the superiority of capitalism over state planning. In 1997 Rafsanjani's second term as president ended and, under the constitution, he could not stand again. From among the former radicals the Council of Guardians and, more importantly Ayatollah Khameneh'i, allowed Ho. Mohammad Khatami to run for election.

As Rafsanjani's minister of culture and Islamic guidance, Khatami had overseen the cultural thaw that had begun when Khomeini issued a number of liberalizing fatwas on cultural issues in 1988, and which intensified after his death in 1989. The scion of a prosperous family from Yazd, he was more worldly and cosmopolitan than most ulema and had lived for some years in Germany, where he led the Shi'i mosque in Hamburg, learnt some German and acquainted himself with European culture. After the combined victory of the centrists and conservatives in the 1992 parliamentary election, however, he resigned under pressure from the conservatives and became director of the national library. He now visited secular intellectuals and deepened his knowledge of Western civilization. Sensing the mounting dissatisfaction in Iranian society, he centred his electoral campaign on the theme of civil society and appealed to three groups in Iranian society that had systematically been humiliated since the revolution, namely young people, women and intellectuals, promising them greater freedom.⁶³ With the help of Rafsanjani and his supporters within the regime, Khatami won an overwhelming victory on 24 May 1997, much to the chagrin of Khameneh'i, who openly favoured the conser-

62. While Fadlallah's emphasis on the Arab world is noted, one should not read Arab–Persian antagonism into his strained relations with the Iranian government. Ayatollah Khu'i was of Iranian descent, as is Ayatollah Sistani. Moreover, Fadlallah's detractors include Arab clerics in both Lebanon and Iraq.

63. For details see Farhad Khosrokhavar, 'Toward an Anthropology of Democratization in Iran', *Critique*, 16 (Spring 2000): 3–29; and Farideh Farhi, 'On the Reconfiguration of the Public Sphere and the Changing Political Landscape of Postrevolutionary Iran', in John Esposito and R. K. Ramazani, eds, *Iran at the Crossroads* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 57–74.

vative candidate. Khatami's fellow reformists won control over parliament in 2000 and he was re-elected in 2001. But non-elected bodies systematically sabotaged their efforts and, in 2004, the conservatives regained control of parliament by disqualifying most reformist candidates, which led to widespread abstentions.

Khatami's vision of a more open society is deeply influenced by his views of Lebanon. His wife is a niece of Musa Sadr, which means he has personal family connections with Lebanon outside the Hizballah nexus. In 1996 Khatami visited Lebanon. On that occasion he made a point of meeting representatives of all communities, including the Maronite patriarch and other Christian dignitaries, and reconnected with the tradition of his wife's uncle. He met Hasan Nasrallah and developed a good rapport with him, but he also visited Nabih Berri and Shaykh Shamseddin (but not Fadlallah), political rivals of Hizballah who claimed the heritage of Musa Sadr. He gave a number of speeches on such issues as democracy, social justice and the relationship between culture and politics.⁶⁴

After Khatami assumed the presidency in 1997, two men who had worked with him when he was minister of culture were among his closest advisers. Both had lived in Beirut before 1997 and had come to appreciate Lebanon's more relaxed way of life.

Seyyed Mohammad Ali Abtahi (born in 1958) was an employee of Seda va Sima, the Iranian state radio and television station, when Khatami appointed him his deputy for international affairs in the ministry of culture. When Khatami resigned, Abtahi followed suit; he rejoined Seda va Sima and, in 1994, he was sent to head the Beirut office. As he tells the story, 'I went to Lebanon ... and lived for close on three years in that small but important and attractive country.'⁶⁵ Elsewhere he writes:

[In Beirut] I became acquainted with the Arabic world – a new window in my career. During my assignment in Beirut, I tried to acquire new perceptions in the worlds of journalists, writers, thinkers and educationists. I also learned the art of reciprocity, mercifulness and coexistence between Christians and Moslems. Such an experience left a deep mark of benignity in my spirit and thought.⁶⁶

Abtahi left Iran at a time when Iranian society was rife with discussions about religion and its place in society, and in Lebanon he found time to reflect on these issues and engage in a dialogue with Christians:

64. Alireza Nourizadeh, 'Khatami, Nasrallah Make Common Cause', *Daily Star*, 19 July 2002; and *RFE/RL Iran Report*, 1:3 (7 December 1998).

65. Sayyid Muḥammad 'Alī Abṭāḥī, *Diālūg bā andīshmandān-i maṣīḥī: dīn dar jahān-i mu'āṣir* (Teheran: Tarḥ-i naw, 1379/2000), p. 7.

66. This is from his website: <http://www.webnevesht.com/en/about.asp>

Lebanon is a special country with unique characteristics. In this country people of different religions have come together and ... experience 'coexisting with the other'. This 'living next to the other' has caused Lebanese Muslims and Christians to have a first-hand experience of one another, to experience one another, and to dialogue with one another. On the other hand, religious and communal fanaticism has provided a fertile ground for the growth of discord and violence, for which reason Lebanese thinkers have been preoccupied with inter-faith dialogue as a way to limit the growth of discord and fanaticism.⁶⁷

His sojourn in Lebanon coincided with the appearance of Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' thesis, and so Abtahi resolved to engage in a dialogue with Christian thinkers, for, as he put it:

Religions are an important part of civilizations. Therefore, interfaith dialogue, if carried out with the intention of gaining mutual understanding, can play an important role in the acceptance, spread and deepening of the dialogue of civilizations. If the followers of different religions do not practise moderation and generosity with each other, how can they call the people of the world to peace, ethics and spirituality?⁶⁸

These reflections resulted in a book of conversations with Hana Fakhoury, Salim Bestros, Adel Theodor Khoury, Tarik Mitri, Bishop Georges Khodr and Mouchir Basile Aoun, all of them Christian theologians.⁶⁹ It was Abtahi who arranged Khatami's above-mentioned visit to Lebanon in 1996. When Khatami announced his candidacy for the presidency, Abtahi resigned his Beirut position to devote himself to the campaign and was rewarded with the position of chief-of-staff when Khatami became president. When Khatami was re-elected he was made vice-president for parliamentary affairs, a position from which he resigned in October 2004 when the new conservative majority in the Majlis made cooperation and coordination between the executive and legislative branches of government difficult.⁷⁰

Khatami's other adviser with extensive Lebanon connections is the journalist Masha'ollah Shamsolvā'ezin, who worked under Khatami in the early 1980s when the latter was editor of the daily newspaper *Keyhan*. In the 1990s Shamsolvā'ezin went to Beirut to further his education, but returned to Iran when Khatami became

67. Abṭāḥī, *Diālūg bā andīshmandān-i maṣīḥī*, pp. 7–8.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

69. *Ibid.*

70. *RFE/RL Report*, 7:36 (18 October 2004).

president. In Teheran he began publishing a newspaper devoted to spreading Khatami's ideas of civil society, but the conservative-dominated judiciary closed the newspaper down a number of times. Each time it would reappear immediately under a different name, but publication finally ceased in September 1999 when the last avatar, *Neshat*, published an article that called for laws to be brought in that recognized human rights, an implicit criticism of Iran's criminal code, which incorporates the law of the talion (*qisās*).⁷¹ According to Shamsolvāʿezin, Lebanon comes close to being the ideal society for Khatami, for it is only there that different religious traditions coexist. Khatami is not unaware of the civil war, but in his opinion the fact that Lebanese society resumed its peaceful coexistence so soon after all the bloodletting says something about its inner strength.⁷²

Under Khatami the Iranian government tried to expand its state-to-state relations with Lebanon without compromising its privileged relationship with Hizballah. In 1996 some Hizballah leaders were apparently unhappy about Khatami's gestures towards Christians, Sunnis and non-Hizballah Shi'is and his espousal of democracy as the ideal form of government, but harmony was soon re-established, for a number of reasons.

The first was the challenge posed by Subhi al-Tufayli. Al-Tufayli had become increasingly estranged from the Hizballah leadership in the 1990s and essentially accused both the party and Iran of having sold out by moderating their policies. In July 1997 he proclaimed his 'revolution of the hungry' in Baalbek and invited the poor and dispossessed of all sects to join him. Hizballah at first tried to settle the dispute peacefully, but in January 1998 al-Tufayli ordered his followers to attack a Hizballah *hawza* in Baalbek. Hizballah avoided fighting al-Tufayli's men and instead let the Lebanese army retake the seminary; al-Tufayli fled to the mountains and Hizballah officially expelled him. Some senior figures inside the Iranian leadership reportedly were willing to back al-Tufayli, but Khatami persuaded them to maintain their support for Hizballah.⁷³ When some Iranian diplomats in Beirut expressed their support for al-Tufayli, they were recalled.⁷⁴ This cemented the tie between Hizballah's leadership and Khatami.

Another factor in bringing Khatami and Hizballah together was the presence in the reformist president's camp of Ali-Akbar Mohtashami, who maintained close personal ties with Hizballah throughout the 1990s. Khatami met Hizballah leaders

71. Buchta, *Who Rules Iran?*, p. 193. On Shamsolvāʿezin and his role in the Iranian press see Elaine Sciolino, *Persian Mirrors: The Elusive Face of Iran* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), pp. 249–60.

72. Mashaʿollah Shamsolvāʿezin, personal interview, 8 July 2003, Teheran.

73. Nourizadeh, 'Khatami'.

74. Bahman Baktiari and Augustus Richard Norton, 'Lebanon End-Game', *Middle East Insight*, 15 (March–April 2000): 26.

during his state visit to Damascus in May 1999⁷⁵ and Nasrallah reportedly supported Khatami's bid for re-election in 2001 on the grounds that his presidency had improved Iran's image in the world.⁷⁶ But the Iranian government also tightened its links with Amal: in June 1999, for instance, Iran supported the election of Nabih Berri as deputy head of the newly founded Islamic Parliamentary Union.⁷⁷

The reformist faction in the Iranian regime was not the only one to reach out to Lebanese groups beyond Hizballah. When Nabih Berri visited Iran in June 1999, he also met Ayatollah Khameneh'i, who lauded the Lebanese for their resistance to Israel, which he averred was a 'cancerous gland' that needed to be removed.⁷⁸ When Khameneh'i's foreign policy adviser, Ali-Akbar Velayati (foreign minister until 1997) visited Lebanon in July 2000, he met both Berri and President Emile Lahoud and urged all Lebanese to unite. In early July 2000 Nasrallah visited Iran and was followed a month later by Berri, and it was believed at the time that the Iranian government used its influence to help bring about cooperation between the two Shi'i movements in the parliamentary elections of early September.⁷⁹

Hizballah has largely stayed out of Iran's factional struggle and the party has found new sources of income to counter its diminishing Iranian subsidies. These include funds collected in Lebanon, contributions by Shi'i Lebanese merchants in the diaspora, tithes paid to Ayatollah Khameneh'i's representatives in Lebanon and revenue from commercial ventures.⁸⁰ With Amal becoming mired in corruption and patron-client relationships centred on the influential person of the speaker of parliament, Nabih Berri, many of its erstwhile supporters have shifted their allegiance to Hizballah. The party now boasts members and sympathizers from all social classes, which is precisely why it can tap into the financial resources of the Shi'i middle class, including Lebanese immigrants in the Americas and Africa, to fund its social, political and military endeavours.

With Hizballah partially emancipating itself from direct Iranian tutelage, the Iranian government has been trying to establish cordial relations with the Lebanese government. Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri was one of the first heads of government to visit Iran after Khatami's election. In late October 1997 he spent five days in Iran, the first Lebanese prime minister to do so since the revolution. Hariri returned to Iran in January and June 2001, each time to discuss bilateral issues and trade.

75. *RFE/RL Report*, 2:32 (9 August 1999).

76. *RFE/RL Report*, 4:18 (7 May 2001), quoting an article in *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 3 May 2001.

77. *RFE/RL Report*, 2:27 (9 August 1999).

78. <http://www.khamenei.de/news/news1999/june1999.htm>. Entry for 20 June 1999. Accessed on 22 October 2004.

79. *RFE/FL Report*, 3:30 (7 August 2000).

80. Asad Allāhī, *Az muqāvatāt tā pīrūzī*, pp. 156–7.

In May 2003 Khatami paid a state visit to Lebanon at the invitation of President Emile Lahoud. The road from the airport to the Phoenicia Hotel in central Beirut was lined with Iranian, Lebanese, Hizballah and Amal flags, and tens of thousands of Shi'is turned out to give him a warm welcome.⁸¹ The next day he gave a speech in Arabic at a rally held at Beirut's sports stadium in which he first expressed his admiration for the Lebanese and then gave a *tour d'horizon* of the political situation in the Middle East in the wake of the American attack on Iraq a few weeks earlier. The president expressed his admiration for his host country rather extravagantly. After Georges Khodr, the Greek Orthodox bishop of Mount Lebanon and an ardent proponent of Christian-Muslim dialogue, introduced him, Khatami said:

Lebanon is the nation of love and justice and consciousness. It is here that the earth takes on a celestial form as the love of Jesus melds with the wisdom of Muhammad and the justice of Ali so that the Lebanese human being – both male and female – may be a model for the victim of injustice who nonetheless carries his head high. Lebanon represents a wonderful, exquisite artistic portrait, one that forms a resplendent image of religion, literature, culture, art and politics. Lebanon stands for a gem whose radiating light illuminates the pitch darkness of night. Indeed, the rays of its light bring pain to the devotees of darkness, prompting them to try and crush this jewel with the hammer of aggression and occupation. They are ignorant that the guarantee for Lebanon's continued existence lies in the resolute convictions and hearts [of the Lebanese] in which palpitates the love of God and life and in souls athirst with burning desire the likes of which cannot be quelled by anything save for the spring of democracy and the love of justice and resistance. Lebanon in its noble sublimity represents a plethora of worlds: the world of the religions and denominations, the world of the sects and communities, the world of the partisans and parties.⁸²

Iran's official anti-Israeli rhetoric notwithstanding, the Iranian government was cooperative when German mediators negotiated an exchange of prisoners between Israel and Hizballah in late 2003. The negotiations resulted in Hizballah releasing an Israeli businessman and the remains of three Israeli soldiers, and Israel repatriating more than 400 Arabs and providing maps of minefields in southern Lebanon. German sources said that, in a second stage, the one Iranian and two Lebanese

81. Daniel J. Wakin, 'Khatami Arrives in Lebanon to Crowds, Chants and Cheers', *New York Times*, 12 May 2003.

82. Muḥammad Khātāmī, *Khātāmī yukhāṭibū Lubnān: hunā ard al-hurriyya wa al-hiwār* (Beirut: al-Nahār, 2003), with an Introduction by Bishop Georges Khodr. I thank Mark Farha for translating this excerpt for me.

citizens imprisoned in Germany for the murder of the Iranian dissidents in 1992 might be released.⁸³ An Iranian delegation led by Ali-Akbar Mohtashami arrived in Beirut on 28 January 2004 to welcome the returning prisoners. In an interview the next day Mohtashami said that Iran had information that the four Iranians the Lebanese Forces had kidnapped in 1982 were alive and being held in Israel.⁸⁴ Since then the Iranian government has tried to keep the issue alive.

Another missing person whose fate has reappeared on the agenda of Middle Eastern politics is Musa Sadr. Since about 2000 Hizballah has been joining Amal to demand an acceptable explanation about his fate from Colonel Qadhdhafi. At first the Iranian government only lent modest support to these demands, but with Qadhdhafi's diplomatic *volte face* on the issue of weapons of mass destruction in late 2003, Libyan-Iranian relations have cooled considerably, which might encourage Iranian officialdom to take a greater interest in Musa Sadr's fate.

CONCLUSION

In the 1990s and early 2000s Hizballah and Iran developed along parallel lines. While the Lebanese party was integrated into the Lebanese political system without becoming too much like other Lebanese parties, the Iranian regime cautiously tried to rejoin the international system in an attempt to improve relations with Europe and the Arab world. But while Hizballah is a centralized organization that can follow a coherent policy, Iran is a fractured polity that cannot.

In both cases, international factors were influential in generating the change. First, the end of the Iran/Iraq war forced Iran's leaders to give priority to reconstruction, which necessitated improving relations with Europe and Japan. Next, the end of the cold war left the United States as sole superpower, depriving Iran and its ally Syria of any leverage against America. The reconstitution of the Lebanese state under Saudi Arabian and American auspices at Ta'if, and the popularity of the peace process among ordinary Lebanese, made it more difficult for Hizballah to maintain its revolutionary anti-status quo posture and acted as an incentive for the party to become a loyal opposition. After the horrors of the Lebanese civil war, the Iranian revolution and the Iran/Iraq war, most Lebanese and most Iranians have aspired to greater civility, and at least some Shi'i leaders in both countries have tried to lead their people in that direction.

As we have seen in this chapter, some Iranian reformers of the late twentieth century revived the pattern of the early part of that century when Iranian modernists admired Lebanon as a model of progress. The difference is that the earlier generation admired Lebanon's secular cosmopolitanism, whereas the post-

83. RFE/RL Report, 7:5 (2 February 2004).

84. RFE/RL Report, 7:6 (9 February 2004).

fundamentalist Muslim reformers of the 1990s were inspired by a spirituality that seemingly transcended religious and sectarian boundaries. For better or worse, Lebanese–Iranian relations are distant no more.

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